# British Politics in the Age of Anne

*Revised Edition*

GEOFFREY HOLMES

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REVISED EDITION

THE HAMBLEDON PRESS
LONDON AND RONCEVERTE

Published by The Hambledon Press 1987

102 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8HX (U.K.)

309 Greenbrier Avenue, Ronceverte WV 24970 (U.S.A.)

ISBN 0 907628 73 7 (Cased)
0 907628 74 5 (Paper)

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First Edition: Macmillan, London 1967

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

Holmes, Geoffrey, *1928-*
British politics in the age of Anne. — 2nd ed.
1. Great Britain — Politics and government —
1702-1714
I. Title
320.941 JN2121702

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Holmes, Geoffrey S., 1928-
British politics in the age of Anne.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Great Britain — Politics and government —
1702-1714. I. Title.
DA495.H59 1987 941.06'9 87-14833

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# Introduction to Revised Edition*

## Party and Politics

It is now twenty years since I finished writing *British Politics in the Age of Anne*. That is a long time in the bustling, hyper-professional world of late 20th-century historical writing and scholarship. Few serious historical studies can be entirely divorced from their context, least of all large-scale works of analysis and interpretation. That being so, and because one can no longer re-create the historiographical climate of the 1960s in which *British Politics* was written,[1] there is a sense in which to try to produce a 'revised edition' is to attempt the impossible. I have not allowed this consideration to oppress me unduly. There were, after all, many other aims in mind while the original work was on the anvil besides that of refuting a particular interpretation of the structure of early 18th-century politics.[2] Thus the reissuing of the book, twelve years after its going out of print, not only enables me to make numerous corrections in the text, appendices and notes, some to rectify misprints or minor factual slips, the rest to revise dates or statistics and certain other items of information in the light of fresh findings or maturer thought. More important, it affords me an opportunity, through the vehicle of a new Introduction, to consider what conclusions of substance

* I am indebted to David Hayton, Clyve Jones, Eveline Cruickshanks, Bill Speck and John Beckett for assisting me in various ways during the preparation of this edition. I am particularly grateful to Mr Jones for help with the Appendix of manuscript sources which follows this Introduction, and to Dr Hayton both for advice on that Appendix and for bringing to my attention a miscellany of errors in the original text and index which had escaped my vigilance.

1. 'The historian writing in the age of Namier, or at least under his shadow . . .' – so runs the book's very first sentence.
2. See pp. 1–6 below, and cf. pp. 405–18.

reached in 1965–6 I would wish to endorse, modify, or perhaps even abandon, twenty years on. It is an opportunity to look again at a whole interpretation in the light of all the primary evidence now available and of the abundance of secondary writing bearing on the subject which has appeared in the meantime.

Between 1966 and 1986 a great deal of fresh manuscript material dating from the late 17th and early 18th centuries has been unearthed, including some collections which I could have used with much profit had I known of their existence in the 1950s and '60s. Other relevant archives, especially continental archives, of which historians were formally aware but which up to that time had barely been touched by students of English history, have been made more accessible through microfilms and transcripts.[3] During the same period the body of secondary literature bearing on many parts of the subject has grown vastly. The history of Church and Dissent, and the relations between the clergy and the politicians; political ideology; politics and finance in the City of London; Jacobitism; the press and its role in the party struggle; the behaviour of the electorate and the struggle in the constituencies: these are just some of the dimensions which are far better understood today than they were two decades ago. Our knowledge of Scottish politics and politicians has been transformed out of all recognition. Inevitably there are facets of the Augustan political scene, highlighted by recent monographs or articles, which can be touched on only in passing in the present essay.[4] But no serious re-assessment of politics in the age of Anne could fail to take account of the social and economic backcloths to the period, since these have been illuminated in many more ways than could reasonably have been anticipated in the mid 1960s. At that time pre-industrial English society between 1660 and 1760 was still a neglected subject, attracting

3. See pp. lxiii–lxvi below for an Appendix of SUPPLEMENTARY MANUSCRIPT SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF EARLY 18th-CENTURY BRITISH POLITICS.

4. For instance, investigations of popular disorders have revealed much about the politicization of the early 18th-century crowd, while thanks to two detailed studies of the magistracy we now know how successfully Whigs and Tories at this period managed to manipulate the commissions of the peace for partisan ends. See G. Holmes, 'The Sacheverell Riots: the Church and the Crowd in Early-Eighteenth-Century London', *Past and Present*, 72 (1976); N. Rogers, 'Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London' [1715–16], *Past and Present*, 79 (1978); L. K. J. Glassey, *Politics and the Appointment of Justices of the Peace, 1675–1725* (Oxford, 1979); Norma Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679–1760* (Berkeley and L.A., 1984). Cf. p. 25 below.

hopeful generalization more than systematic investigation. Recent historiography has changed all that. And not surprisingly in a computer-conscious age, quantification has been called for and refined statistical techniques applied to try to resolve fundamental questions which now interest political as well as socio-economic historians: questions such as literacy levels, demographic trends, or prices. For that matter, political historians themselves have resorted to similar techniques since 1970 to analyse poll-books or to determine 'who ran' the House of Commons.[5]

Paradoxically, one of the historiographical trends of the past twenty years which has done most to assist the interpretation of Queen Anne's reign is the attention paid to the reigns which immediately preceded and followed it. In addition to the publication of first-class biographies of William III and George I,[6] the history both of the court and the parties from 1689 to 1702, and again from 1714 to 1727, has by now been so closely studied that we are able to view the politics of the years in between with a longer and distinctly clearer perspective than was possible in the mid-1960s. The identification and collation of many new division lists and other parliamentary lists, especially for the years 1689–1701 and 1715–19,[7] has meant that the solidity of party allegiance in those years can be measured with some confidence. This in turn has helped scholars to make more informed judgments on the arguments about the pattern of parliamentary and court politics under William III and the early Hanoverians which have been advanced in the string of book-length

5. See W. A. Speck and W. A. Gray, 'Computer Analysis of Poll Books: An Initial Report', *Bull.I.H.R.* 43 (1970); and further studies of early 18th-century voting behaviour, utilising computer analysis, by Speck and Gray, in *Bull.I.H.R.* 48 (1975) and in *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 1 (1975), and by J. F. Quinn *et al.*, in 'Yorkshiremen go to the Polls', *Northern History*, 21 (1985). See also T. K. Moore and H. G. Horwitz, 'Who Runs the House? Aspects of Parliamentary Organization in the Later Seventeenth Century', *Journ. Mod. Hist.* 43 (1971).

*Note:* In all footnotes to this Introduction I use the abbreviations listed on pp. lxxiii–iv.

6. S. B. Baxter, *William III* (1966); R. Hatton, *George I: Elector and King* (1978).

7. See I. F. Burton, P. W. J. Riley & E. Rowlands, *Political Parties in the Reigns of William III and Anne: The Evidence of Division Lists* (*Bull.I.H.R.* Spec. Suppl. 7, 1968); A. N. Newman (ed.), *The Parliamentary Lists of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Leicester, 1970); D. Hayton and C. Jones (eds.), *A Register of Parliamentary Lists, 1660–1761* (Leicester, 1979); E. Cruickshanks, D. Hayton and C. Jones, 'Divisions in the House of Lords on the Transfer of the Crown and other Issues, 1689–94: Ten New Lists', *Bull.I.H.R.* 53 (1980); D. Hayton and C. Jones (eds.), *A Register of Parliamentary Lists, 1660–1761: A Supplement* (Leicester, 1982).

studies,[8] as well as interpretative essays,[9] to appear in the past two decades.

It may seem improbable that any consensual view could emerge from a literature so extensive and diverse. Nevertheless the conviction has grown, and strengthened with almost every new contribution to the debate, that there was a *basic* polarity in parliamentary politics, not simply from the Revolution Settlement of 1689 to the earliest years of Hanoverian Britain but, in a modified form, far into George II's reign; and that this polarity remained, what it had been from the beginning, that of Whig and Tory. With regard to the first thirty years or so after the Revolution no-one has made this point more crisply than David Hayton: '. . . in this period "Court and Country" ceased to represent a standing political division. *A* Country party manifested itself from time to time; *the* Country party did not have a continuous existence. Whigs and Tories co-operated – in Parliament on Country measures, at elections sometimes, on a Country platform – but they did not lose their identity. They still remained Whigs and Tories first and foremost.'[10] On the opposition politics of the period 1720–42, also, Eveline Cruickshanks has written decisively: 'There was indeed a "country platform" . . . but there was

8. D. Rubini, *Court and Country, 1688–1702* (1968); R. Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1715–1754* (2 vols, 1970); B. W. Hill, *The Growth of Parliamentary Parties, 1689–1742* (1976); H. Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977); L. J. Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714–60* (Cambridge, 1982). See also J. M. Beattie, *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (Cambridge, 1967), chs. 5, 7; J. H. (now Sir John) Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675–1725* (1967), chs. 3, 5, 6.

9. See H. Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics' and E. L. Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', both in G. Holmes (ed.), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689–1714* (1969); J. C. D. Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760' (*E.H.R.* 93, 1978) and 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688–1832' (*Hist. Journ.* 23, 1980); W. A. Speck, 'Whigs and Tories dim their glories: English political parties under the first two Georges', in J. Cannon (ed.), *The Whig Ascendancy: Colloquies on Hanoverian England* (1981); E. Cruickshanks, 'The Political Management of Sir Robert Walpole, 1720–42' in J. Black (ed.), *Britain in the Age of Walpole* (1984). D. Hayton, 'The "Country" interest and the party system, 1689–*c.* 1720', in C. Jones (ed.), *Party and Management in Parliament, 1660–1784* (Leicester, 1984), is of outstanding importance. See also the article by Colin Brooks, cited below p. xxxix, n. 113; and L. J. Colley and M. Goldie, 'The principles and practice of eighteenth-century party', *Hist. Journ.* 12 (1979).

10. Hayton, 'The "Country" interest', *loc. cit.* p. 65. See also H. L. Snyder, 'Party Configurations in the Early Eighteenth-Century House of Commons', *Bull.I.H.R.* 45 (1972).

no country party.'[11] These are conclusions that few, if any, students of late 17th or 18th century politics would have reached without deep misgivings in the 1950s or early 1960s.

But where do they leave the concept of an 'age of Anne' in British politics? The assumption underlying so much of what I wrote twenty years ago was that there was a period in the early 18th century, not precisely coterminous with the Queen's reign but extending very little outside it, in which both the substance of politics and the way the political system worked was sufficiently distinctive to justify study in its own right: that these were indeed the climactic years of 'the first age of Party'. This assumption, I believe, still holds, though there is a need to be rather more accommodating now about the time-span associated with it. Indisputably there was a 'watershed', locatable in the last twelve months or so of King William's reign, dividing the undulating uplands of post-Revolution politics from their high plateau.[12] It is equally clear that Queen Anne's death, in itself, made at least two very significant changes to the landscape. First, it brought to the throne in August 1714 a king who was deeply distrustful of the Tories and who, in sharp contrast with his two predecessors,[13] felt no rooted ideological or moral objection to presiding over a state in which one party enjoyed a permanent monopoly of influence and profit. Then, within weeks, it put paid to the 'managerial' system[14] which for the best part of two decades had preserved some kind of balance, if at times an uneasy one, between the ambitions and aspirations of the party leaders and the principles and prerogatives of the Crown. The prompt retirement of the duke of Shrewsbury, following hard on the heels of the fall of Lord Treasurer Oxford, marked this system's demise. In 1716 a further quintessential feature of high Augustan political topography, the statutory maximum of three years on the life of every Parliament, was also erased. Erected in 1694, it had done much to keep party heats on the boil by precipitating four of the eight General Elections held between January 1701 and January 1715. But it was bulldozed away by the

11. Cruickshanks, *loc. cit.* (n. 9 above), pp. 32–3. She adds: 'It is significant that historians who have done detailed work on the period [since 1970] . . . all agree on a Whig-Tory division, not a court-country one'. Speck (n. 9), however, has been one prominent dissentient, as was Rubini, earlier, on William III's reign (n. 8).

12. Cf. pp. 47, 63–4, 82–3, 406–8 and *passim* below; G. Holmes and W. A. Speck (eds.), *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England, 1694–1716* (1967), pp. 3–4, 20–25.

13. See ch. 6 below.

14. See below, pp. 188–94 *et seq.*

Septennial Act, a display of *realpolitik* by the now ascendant Whigs for which the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715–16 provided the excuse but which, as many libertarians in their own party conceded, was desperately hard to justify in terms of any principle they had ever espoused.

Whereas the first eight Elections of the 18th century, down to 1715, were crammed into 14 years, placing all but the most rock-solid electoral interests in jeopardy and producing violent oscillations in party fortunes and in the composition of the House of Commons, the next eight were spread out over 43 years – ideal conditions for the consolidation of territorial and government influence and for the erosion of the electorate's independence. But even in the short term the effects of the Septennial Act signalled the fact that the special hallmarks of the politics of the age of Anne were fast disappearing. It is inconceivable that between 1701 and 1715 either party could have survived in an election year two such traumas as the recent defection of half its Cabinet ministers to the Opposition[15] or a massive financial scandal, without suffering such serious damage at the polls that the monarch would have been forced to turn, in part at least, to their opponents. And yet, both in 1718, when Whig divisions were potentially crippling, and early in 1721, when the South Sea Bubble debris still littered the arena, a revivified Tory party found itself denied by law the chance to translate its advantages into votes and power. By the time the first septennial milestone was finally reached in 1722 the opportunity had gone; and it would not present itself again as long as the old Tory party lived.[16] The 1722 Election certainly demonstrated the Tory party's capacity for survival as an organized entity; and as Linda Colley has shown,[17] Toryism retained for forty more years a degree of political relevance which went beyond mere atavistic survivalism. But equally this Election left no room for doubt in the mind of any realist that for a party

15. The defectors, over the space of 12 months, were Townshend (dismissed, April 1717); Devonshire, Walpole, Methuen, Orford (resigned March-April 1717); and Cowper (resigned April 1718).

16. Compare the situation 12 months earlier when large numbers of Whigs had been prepared to back a vote of censure on their own prime minister, and many had been hustled into changing their minds only by their leaders' desperate plea that unless Sunderland was acquitted of malpractices in the South Sea crisis 'the ministry are blown up, and must and necessarily will be succeeded by a Tory one'. Thomas Brodrick, M.P., to Lord Midleton, 16 March 1721, printed in William Coxe, *Memoirs of . . . Sir Robert Walpole* (1798), ii, 214. In all contemporary quotations in this Introduction spelling has been modernized.

17. See n. 8 above.

whose strength in the House of Lords was already shattered beyond hope of repair there could be no future prospect of breaking their opponents' supremacy without that remotest of contingencies, a total withdrawal of the Crown's favour from the Whigs. Down to George II's death in 1760 it was only in a few fleeting interludes of undue Tory euphoria that it could seriously be contemplated. 1722 thus marks the line at which the last vestiges of the politics of party, in the clear-cut form that had characterized the age of Anne, disappeared and the politics of oligarchy, which recognized and incorporated the divisions between Whigs and Tories without being dictated by them, became firmly established as the dominant pattern for the future.

Oligarchic politics as practised in the age of Walpole and the Pelhams was an intricate game, played out by a limited number of players according to certain recognized rules. But it was not a national occupation. Only very rarely and briefly – as in 1733 – did it acquire what may be called a 'social dimension'. In sharp contrast, 'the most extraordinary feature of the age of Anne [as it seemed to me in the 1960s, and still does] was the unprecedented extent to which party strife, the inescapable and all-pervading distinction between Tory and Whig, invaded and finally took possession of the very lives of the politically-conscious'.[18] In chapters 1 and 9 we see something of what this implied away from Whitehall and Westminster – the conditions which prompted William Speck and me to describe the England of those years unequivocally as the *Divided Society*.[19] Since then, however, with a growing understanding of some of the social trends of the late 17th and early 18th centuries has come an awareness of certain 'softer contours on the social terrain', easily lost sight of from a perspective where political schism and social fissures loom so large. In a paper first composed in 1979[20] I sought to trace the continuity of some of those features through from their origins in the years between the Restoration and the 1690s to the point at which they blend into the stabler social, as well as political landscape of early Georgian England. Higher living standards over a period of much improved agricultural productivity, of food prices that were in general favourable to the

18. Pp. 20–1 below.

19. Also in 1967. See above n. 12.

20. Geoffrey Holmes, 'The Achievement of Stability: the Social Context of Politics from the 1680s to the Age of Walpole', in J. Cannon (ed.), *The Whig Ascendancy* (1981).

consumer and of demographic stasis;[21] the steady development of what has been called both 'the new urban society' and 'the urban renaissance' in pre-industrial England;[22] the rapidly growing amount of both business and professional wealth being injected into provincial society, particularly in the towns: these, I have suggested, were powerful forces working in the long term, down to the mid 18th century, towards fusion rather than towards fission in the social order, and contributing to the ultimate achievement of greater political stability.[23]

The reality of the 'divided society' of the age of Anne may therefore have been rather more finely shaded in some respects, and rather more complex, than I depicted it in the late 1960s. But a reality it was, none the less. The wealth of important work produced in the meantime on aspects of early 18th-century England as different in character as the behaviour of the electorate, the activities of the press and the condition of the Church of England amply confirms that the impact of party conflict there, as so often elsewhere, was for the most part starkly divisive.

The English and Welsh electorate, which had reached well over 300,000 by the end of Anne's reign,[24] comprised a reasonably representative, if

21. In addition to the relevant sources cited in the paper just referred to (n. 20 above), massive documentation and analysis of these trends is now available in Joan Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol V, *1640–1750*, Parts 1 and 2 (Cambridge, 1985) and E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871* (1981). See also J. R. Wordie, 'The Chronology of English Enclosure, 1500–1914', *Econ. H.R.* 36 (1983).

22. J. Stevenson, J. Barrett and P. Corfield, *The Rise of the New Urban Society 1660–1780* (Milton Keynes, 1977); P. N. Borsay, 'The English Urban Renaissance: the development of provincial urban culture, *c.* 1680–*c.* 1760', *Social History*, 5 (1977); P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, 1600–1800* (1984), Introduction, and esp. pp. 49–61, for an up-to-date guide to the recent historiography of the pre-industrial town.

23. The thesis should not, of course, be pushed too far. For instance, it sits less happily on some towns than on others, as Joyce Ellis has shown in regard to Newcastle-on-Tyne (P. Clark [ed.], *op. cit.* pp. 190–227).

24. I have estimated that by 1722 it probably stood at between 330,000 and 340,000. The widely credited figure for *c.* 1715–22 of 250,000–260,000 fails to take account of 'turn-out', which was rarely more than 75% at any General Election, and sometimes less. See G. Holmes, *The Electorate and the National Will in the First Age of Party* (Lancaster, 1976), pp. 18–23, for the evidence on which this revision is based. It has since been strengthened by the publication of careful work on the poll books and canvass lists of the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland (R. Hopkinson, 'The Electorate of Cumberland and Westmorland in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries', *Northern Hist.* 15, 1979).

randomly composed, cross-section of society above the ranks of the very poor and propertyless. (The tiny Scottish electorate – well under 3000 voters – was infinitely more exclusive). The 'forty-shilling freeholders' of the shires ranged socially from the élite of the squirearchy to tens of thousands of quite humble farmers and many urban craftsmen, tradesmen and shopkeepers;[25] and the social spread of the 110,000 or so borough voters was wider still, a fact amply documented by those contemporary poll books which record occupations as well as votes. Over the past twenty years the behaviour of the late Stuart and early Georgian electorate has been subjected to intense scrutiny.[26] And the two overriding conclusions which have emerged – not least from poll-book analysis – match remarkably exactly the 'twin phenomena' Professor Speck detected in his 1970 study of *The Struggle in the Constituencies*: the existence in the age of Anne both 'of an electorate clearly divided along party lines during general elections' and of 'a substantial floating vote between elections'.[27] The former is most vividly manifest in the amount of 'plumping' which poll books regularly reveal in situations which presented the acid test of party solidarity for the early 18th-century electorate – namely, when one party could put up only one candidate in a two-member constituency against their opponents' pair. The vote was a cherished possession in the unreformed electoral system and no elector would carelessly throw one of his two away; so it is all the more striking to find as many as 85 or even 90 per cent of the single candidate's votes in such circumstances being cast solely for him and his party. Whereas a majority of voters remained consistent in their allegiance, however, an equally significant minority, in some cases as high as twenty per cent, switched sides. And along with the proclivities of new voters, such switches – then, as now – were crucial in determining the outcome of General Elections. No serious

25. J. H. Plumb, 'The Growth of the Electorate in England from 1600 to 1715', *Past and Present*, 45 (1969); D. Hirst, *The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 29–34.

26. See the articles based on computer analysis of poll books cited at n. 5 above; also, W. A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: the Struggle in the Constituencies, 1701–1715* (1970); *id.*, 'The General Election of 1715', *E.H.R.* 90 (1975); R. Hopkinson, art. cit. (n. 24 above); J. Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform, 1640–1832* (Cambridge, 1973), ch. 2. For the Elections of 1715 and 1722, see R. Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1715–1754* (1970), i, 189–381 *passim*.

27. *Tory and Whig*, p. 22. For reasons given above, p. ix, the original edition of *British Politics in the Age of Anne* deliberately concentrated for the most part on the centre of politics. Although containing many references to individual General Elections its only sustained section on electoral politics occurs in chapter 9 (pp. 312–21 below).

student of electoral politics in this period would deny that non-political factors played some part in them: venality; a basically self-interested or deferential response to a recent change of ministry at the centre, and therefore to a change in the local patronage situation; or deferential voting of a more personal kind, reflecting a similar change of allegiance by a patron or landlord. And yet, the way the parties conducted their election campaigns nationally suggests that they believed the bulk of the floating vote was a 'conviction' vote and that it could be seduced by playing on political or religious fears or prejudices. They had much evidence to sustain their belief. After the 1710 Election, for example, few doubted that many thousands of former Whig supporters had switched sides because of their fears that the Whigs were threatening the Church of England; and in both 1708 and 1715 it was widely accepted that large numbers of former Tory supporters voted Whig because they were persuaded that a Tory Parliament would threaten the Protestant Succession.[28]

In making conversions and in fortifying the faithful both Whigs and Tories exploited the contemporary press to full effect. My 1967 view of the press as 'an increasingly formidable political engine', especially after 1695,[29] has been corroborated and amplified in many ways by the specialized work of the various scholars who, from their different angles, have subsequently

28. See below, pp. 106–7, p. 107 n.* The most forceful of a number of recent attempts to argue against the view that the Augustan electorate was highly politicized and to re-emphasise ministerial patronage and magnate influence have been by J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 15–26, and L. J. Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, pp. 17–20, 118–19, 120. Their arguments are in turn addressed by W. A. Speck, 'The Electorate in the First Age of Party' in C. Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age of Party 1680–1750: Essays presented to Geoffrey Homes* (1987), a most valuable and temperate discussion of the many controversial issues raised by studies of the electorate, which I read in typescript after this section of the Introduction had been written. For a subtler approach than those of Clark and Colley to the positing of a more 'deferential' model for the behaviour of the electorate, based on the study of two polls (1713, 1715) in a single – and in some ways untypical – county, see Norma Landau, 'Independence, Deference, and Voter Participation: The Behaviour of the Electorate in Early-Eighteenth-Century Kent', *Hist. Journ.* 22 (1979). There are, however, some serious flaws in Dr Landau's logic. For instance, few of the factors she adduces to explain the 'swing' in Kent between 1713 and 1715 can explain the often critical shift of votes in the average constituency between 1708 and 1710, because for the most part the local circumstances they presuppose did not exist in October 1710.

29. See below, p. 30; also pp. 30–3 *passim*.

explored the subject.[30] By the beginning of the 18th century pamphlets printed in London by the tens of thousands to promote a party cause at the onset of a new election campaign were already being pumped assiduously round the provinces; while in 1705, for the first time, propaganda was directed during a General Election not just at the electorate at large but at key constituencies.[31] In 1709–10 one chain of events alone, the impeachment, trial and triumph of the Anglican clergyman, Dr. Henry Sacheverell,[32] released an unprecedented flood of paper on the hapless electorate before and during the General Election of October 1710 – no fewer than 575 editions of relevant tracts, broadsheets and sermons, published between 5 November 1709 and 1 November 1710.[33] The fundamental differences between the age of Anne and the age of Walpole are reflected in the change, both of tone and target, which came over their political propaganda. By the 1720s and 1730s the approach of the polemicists had become at once far more secular and far more satirical, their polarities pro-government and pro-opposition at least as much as Whig and Tory, the issues on which they concentrated increasingly the standard preoccupations of Country versus Court, even to the point of divergence from the more complex priorities of rank-and-file parliamentary politicians.[34]

30. E.g. W. A. Speck, 'Political Propaganda in Augustan England', *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.* 5th ser., 22 (1972); J. O. Richards, *Party Propaganda under Queen Anne: The General Elections of 1702–13* (Athens, Georgia, 1972); Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (1972); H. L. Snyder, 'Newsletters in England, 1689–1715: with special reference to John Dyer', in D. H. Bond and W. R. McLeod (eds.), *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth Century Journalism* (West Virginia, 1977); J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge, 1979). Downie's essay 'The Development of the Political Press, 1688–1742' (in C. Jones [ed.], *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750)*, analyses the changing language of politics to make a telling contribution to the debate on the growth of political stability. Swift's political writings have received much attention, including a comprehensive treatment by Downie in *Jonathan Swift: Political Writer* (1984), and P. B. Hyland's 'Richard Steele, the Press and the Hanoverian Succession, 1713–1716' (Lancaster Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1984) is a penetrating study of the influence of the most gifted Whig propagandist of the day, over a period which included two General Elections, and of the context in which he wrote.

31. Speck, 'Political Propaganda', *loc. cit.* p. 28; Richards, *op. cit.* pp. 64n., 70–1.

32. See below pp. 92–3 and *passim* (538–9).

33. F. F. Madan, *A Critical Bibliography of Dr Henry Sacheverell*, ed. W. A. Speck (Lawrence, Kansas, 1978), pp. 18–193; G. Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (1973), pp. 72–5.

34. Speck, 'Political Propaganda', *loc. cit.* pp. 26–32; M. Harris, 'Print and Politics in the Age of Walpole', in J. Black (ed.), *op. cit.* pp. 189–210; ch. 4 below for Court-Country issues. Cf. above, pp. xii–xiii.

The Church of England also reflected by the 1730s a political scene much changed since Anne's reign. In the first two decades of the 18th century no group in English society, not even the gentry, presented such a face of discord and dissension on account of their political convictions as the Anglican clergy. With the status of religious minorities, the future of the religious establishment and the very health of religion itself among the most obtrusive and emotive issues confronting the lay politicians and the electorate, the cause of bitter divisions between Tories and Whigs,[35] the place of the clergy themselves in political life remained appropriately a central one. By the 1720s, however, it was rapidly becoming peripheral. And this too was appropriate; because after the failure of the Whig ministry of Stanhope and Sunderland to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts in 1719 it was only at brief and widely spaced intervals through the rest of the century that religious squalls whipped up the waters of politics to a height that caused serious alarm.[36] Moreover, if the angry disagreements which had rent the clergy between 1700 and 1720 were muted thereafter, so also was a good deal of their former vitality.

The effects on the Established Church of its invasion by Whig-Tory enmity are considered at various points in the original text of this book.[37] What emerges less clearly from what I wrote in 1967, because it was at that time far from perfectly understood, is how far such phenomena as the struggles in Convocation, divergent and divisive attitudes to Protestant Dissent, and the use of the pulpit for party ends were symptomatic simply of a politicized clergy and how far of a malaise within the Church itself and in the religious life of England. Furthermore, how can we explain the sheer depth of the Church's political embroilment after the Revolution? Why, for instance, did an episcopate which in 1680 had been Divine Right Tory to a man lean thirty years later quite heavily towards support of the Whig party?[38] Why, in most English counties – as we can now be sure from their surviving poll books – did an average of 75–80 per cent of the parish clergy remain

35. See below, pp. 97–108; G. Holmes, *Religion and Party in Late Stuart England* (Hist. Assn., 1975).

36. Notably in 1733, 1735–6, 1753, 1779–80 and 1787–90. This is not to dissent from Jonathan Clark's recent contention that 'the Church must occupy a large place in any picture of eighteenth-century English society': it merits very serious attention. See J. C. D. Clark, *op. cit.* p. 277 and ch. 5, *passim*. For the Test and Corporation Acts see below, p. 105.

37. See for example pp. 28–30, 98, 99–100, 106, 398–400 below.

38. See below, pp. 434–5.

fiercely committed to the Tories in the General Elections of Anne's reign, while the remainder doggedly opposed candidates who claimed to be standing in 'the Church interest'? Such questions as these need perplex us no longer; for much has been learned in the past twenty years about the internal condition of the Church at this period and about the complex of problems which beset the Anglican clergy in the first generation after the Revolution, inducing in many of them a crisis of confidence and in some a basic crisis of faith. Disoriented by the undermining of their old role as the monarchy's chief prop; harassed for 19 years of war by the highest taxation they had ever known, a grievous aggravation of the perennial problem of clerical poverty; deeply concerned at falling church attendances, and conversely at the high profile of the dissenters following the Toleration Act; and most of all disturbed by the rationalist and increasingly sceptical attitude displayed in fashionable intellectual circles towards traditional Christianity: for all these reasons, and others,[39] Anglican divines found themselves by 1700 gravely at odds over where lay the best road ahead for them and their church. In 1701 King William reluctantly recalled Convocation, and in so doing provided a theatre in which the newly emerging 'High' and 'Low' parties in the Church could consolidate and acquire a recognised leadership. And from then until its suppression in 1717 it was the Lower House of Convocation, as Dr. Bennett has explained, to which the High Churchmen looked to frame solutions to the Church's problems, and the lay Tories in the House of Commons – duly supported from the pulpit, in print and at the polls by High Church parsons – from whom they hoped to secure the legislation that would give these solutions statutory effect.

It was essentially this strategy – of which the Occasional Conformity and Schism bills[40] were but two salient features – which locked the clergy so

39. See, *inter alia*, G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688–1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975), especially chs. 1 and 3; *id.*, 'Conflict in the Church', in G. Holmes (ed.), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689–1714* (1969); G. Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (1973), ch. 2, 'The Church'; *id.*, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society 1680–1730* (1982), ch. 4; G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), chs. 1–3; J. H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Later Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Urbana, Illinois, 1978); M. R. Watts, *The Dissenters: from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), ch. 4; A. Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650–1875* (Manchester, 1962), chs. 4, 5; J. Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660–1750* (1976); M. C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution* (1976).

40. See below, pp. 54–5, 100–4.

firmly, and to their ultimate detriment, into the party battles of the age of Anne. For however much Low Church bishops and parsons, marshalled by Archbishop Tenison, would have preferred mainly non-political remedies for the Church of England's ills, as would leading moderates such as Bishop Nicolson of Carlisle,[41] the relentless pressure of their opponents soon forced them in self-defence to seek the protection of the Whigs, both in Parliament and in the dioceses. The Sacheverell affair of 1709–10[42] was the lurid climax of the Church's entanglement in party politics. Its anti-climax came in the 1720s in the shape of that erastian alliance between Low Churchmen and Whigs which did much to condition the political, as well as religious climate of Walpole's day.

## The Working of Politics

Important though it was at a time when 'Namierism' was rampant[43] simply to demonstrate the reality of a two-party division in Augustan politics and society, the deeper concern of *British Politics in the Age of Anne* lay with finding answers to two questions: what was politics in this period about – what were its themes, issues, preoccupations and priorities? and how did politics work, at the centre of affairs? For some inscrutable reason the working of politics, within its post-Revolution framework of monarchical government, regular parliamentary sessions and strong party loyalties, has received less attention subsequently than its substance. Nevertheless the *dramatis personae* on the centre stage have attracted their fair share of the limelight; and it has been mainly through studies of individuals, and through the interest shown in ministerial and Court in-fighting, in the organization and management of both Houses of Parliament and in the influence of parliamentary pressure-groups[44] that the fresh research of the 1970s and early 1980s has filled out my picture of the 'high' political system in operation.

41. For Nicolson's politics, see C. Jones and G. Holmes (eds.), *The London Diaries of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, 1702–1718* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 24–51 and *passim*.

42. See above, p. xix.

43. See below, pp. 1–9.

44. On the Jacobites, see below pp. xxxv–vii. On the October Club, see H. T. Dickinson. 'The October Club', *H.L.Q.* 33 (1970); D. Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–14* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 48–184 *passim*; on the Scots, G. Holmes and C. Jones, 'Trade, the Scots and the Parliamentary Crisis of 1713', *Parl. History*, 1 (1982); on the rival East India interests of 1697–1702, H. Horwitz, 'The East India Trade, the Politicians and the Constitution, 1689–1702', *Journ. Brit. Studs.* (1978), pp. 9–18.

At the centre of that picture the conscientious, tenacious, pain-wearied figure of Queen Anne herself remains obstinately in place, fortified there by Edward Gregg's authoritative biography.[45] Professor Gregg's book is more than a portrait of a Queen; it is a much-needed adjunct to all earlier accounts of the court and ministerial heartland of politics during her reign, especially strong after 1710. Whether the new evidence he utilizes justifies the more extravagant general claims he makes for Anne's political influence and achievements[46] is for readers to decide for themselves: for my own part, I prefer to abide by my more guarded, though still substantial, reappraisal of 1967.[47] Nevertheless it is remarkable how by one means or another the Queen did contrive to realize some of her most cherished hopes and ambitions, outfacing or outlasting formidable political opposition in the process. Her heart was set on the Union of England and Scotland and on a just but profitable peace with France after the bloodshed of Malplaquet, and they both came to pass. She was resolved to protect her beloved Church of England from blatant political exploitation, and she did so.[48] As Gregg reminds us, she took her own unwavering view of the succession question, determined that the House of Hanover should succeed her but equally resolute about keeping it at arm's length during her lifetime; and she died in the knowledge that on this critical issue her single-mindedness had triumphed over others' expediency.[49] One must add, too, that even in her long and exhausting struggle against 'the merciless men of both parties',

45. *Queen Anne* (1980). A predecessor, David Green's *Queen Anne* (1970), though less fully researched, is a sensitive and well-written non-professional study. The same writer's *Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (1967) is the best life of the termagant royal favourite whose influence and decline I discuss briefly below (pp. 210–12 and ch. 6 *passim*) and who receives scathing treatment from Gregg.

46. They are summed up in Gregg, *op. cit.* pp. 402–5.

47. See below, pp. 188, 192–210, 414–15. It is important not to place more on the ascertainable facts than they will bear. Thus the Cabinet minutes that have survived simply do not entitle us to translate the undoubted regularity of the Queen's presence at meetings into an effective 'presiding role', while those appearances *incognita* in the House of Lords which did from time to time affect the temper of debates and probably swayed some votes (see below, pp. 390–1) can hardly be said to have remotely approached 'assiduous attendance'. Cf. Gregg, *op. cit.* p. 403.

48. See, for example, G. V. Bennett, 'Robert Harley, the Godolphin Ministry and the Bishoprics Crisis of 1707', *E.H.R.* 82 (1967); Gregg, *op. cit.* ch. 9, 'The Bishoprics Crisis'.

49. Henry Snyder's important reconstruction of 'The Last Days of Queen Anne', *H.L.Q.* 34 (1971), makes use of the journal account of Sir John Evelyn, who had his information from Lord Chancellor Harcourt.

while she clearly lost some battles she did not lose the war.[50]

That Anne managed to see even these objectives achieved (and there were others), in the course of a war which cruelly underscored her own exceedingly limited grasp of state affairs, was in its way a considerable feat. It could never have been accomplished, however, unless the statesmen she was forced to depend on to direct her government and manage her ministries, notably her two prime ministers, Lord Godolphin and Robert Harley, earl of Oxford, had sympathized with some of her ideals and prejudices and found it conducive to efficient administration to implement others.[51] It is clear, for instance, that Oxford's adroit management of the House of Lords played an utterly essential part in securing parliamentary approval of the peace with France between December 1711 and the spring of 1713 and, for another year at least, in protecting the Court and the ministry from Whig exploitation of their difficulties over the Protestant Succession. His characteristically resourceful methods have been the subject of an expert study by Clyve Jones[52] which continues the rehabilitation of the Upper House that began with chapter 12 of the present book in 1967. Appropriately, if largely coincidentally, Oxford's last session in the Lords before his death – that of 1723, when he defied his physical infirmities to support the brave but unsuccessful defence of Bishop Atterbury – was to prove in retrospect the conclusive end of that House's 'golden age', which had opened in 1701.

Harley, 'the Sorcerer', continues in other ways to cast his spell over almost every historian of post-Revolution politics, although none has so far written the truly definitive biography which his mountainous legacy of papers deserves. Given half a chance he will upstage most other heroes through the sheer pervasiveness of his influence and the mystery which often shrouds his

50. See below, pp. 198–210.

51. E.g. the fostering of a non-political civil service, to which Godolphin and Oxford made decisive contributions. Holmes, *Augustan England* (1982), pp. 243–5 and ch. 8 *passim*.

52. C. Jones, '"The Scheme Lords, the Necessitous Lords and the Scots Lords": the Earl of Oxford's management and the "Party of the Crown" in the House of Lords, 1711–14', in *idem.* (ed.), *Party and Management in Parliament, 1660–1784* (Leicester 1984); cf. below, pp. 384–94, 400–02. Subsequently, in an essay of major importance ('The House of Lords and the Growth of Parliamentary Stability, 1701–1742', in *idem* [ed.], *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750* [1987]), the same scholar has placed the 'golden age', along with the whole problem of the management of the Upper House, in a far wider setting. For the fullest recent general assessment of the role of the Lords in early 18th-century politics, see Jones and Holmes (eds.), *London Diaries of William Nicolson*, Intro., pp. 62–105.

true intentions. In Gareth Bennett's fluent, fascinating study of Bishop Francis Atterbury, even that dynamic figure and born political animal is not infrequently nudged aside by Robert Harley. Dr. Bennett's book, being as central to the political as well as the ecclesiastical history of the age of Anne as its title suggests,[53] is admirably complementary to the present work. Harley's political aims and methods, his relations with the Queen and with the Tory party are considered in depth, and we also see the ex-Puritan portrayed in a role which I perforce found little space for, that of ecclesiastical manager and manipulator.[54] Harley's Puritan background and its imprint on his subsequent career has intrigued both the professional historians, Angus McInnes and Sheila Biddle, who in the early 1970s tried to grapple with his story at length.[55] One of the most subtle, oblique and complex politicians who have ever lived will always defy any interpretation of his career that is too simplistic. This was a point made by a number of McInnes's reviewers about a thesis which detected a magic key in Harley's 'ineradicable Country psychology' and the tensions this supposedly produced in a man compelled to take high responsibility and office against his natural inclinations. What both authors do convincingly show is that a sensitive understanding of Harley's domestic ambience (he was in many ways a very private public figure), his religious faith and his implicit trust in Providence do help to unravel some knots in his political behaviour. But, as I have written elsewhere,[56] 'I fancy that certain twists and turns of [his] career will remain mysterious, and something of the man himself will always elude us. To adapt a Harleian figure of speech, the abundant evidence has something of the quality of fine sand: the harder one squeezes it between the hands, the more it runs through the fingers.'

There could be no greater contrast, in temperament, methods, religious belief and political instinct, than that between Harley and Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, his one-time friend and ally who became his bitterest rival. The interplay between them[57] has been studied not only at book length

53. See above, n. 39.

54. For a valuable exploration of another previously neglected facet of 'the Master's' manifold activities, his exploitation of the press as an instrument of government, see Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press* (n. 30 above).

55. A. McInnes, *Robert Harley, Puritan Politician* (1970); S. Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley* (U.S.A., 1973; London, 1975). Neither is a biography in the true sense. They are best seen as extended essays.

56. *E.H.R.* 87 (1972), p. 127.

57. See below, pp. 262–3, 269–70 and *passim*.

by Biddle and in an essay by the present writer[58] but in the only thoroughly professional and authoritative biography of Bolingbroke ever attempted.[59] I have never doubted that the way the political system worked in the early 18th century was influenced almost as much by quirks of human personality as by the system itself. I should like to think that this conviction is stamped on every chapter in Part Two; and in view of it, it is reassuring that Professor Dickinson's assessment of Bolingbroke in the years 1701–15 accords quite closely with my own. The paradox and the fascination of the man is that in some respects nature had endowed him almost too prodigally for the highest political prizes which he coveted; yet at the same time she had betrayed him. His gifts dazzled Swift into eulogising him as 'the greatest young man I ever knew' and made him, as Secretary of State under Harley, an arbiter of the peace of Europe before his mid thirties.[60] But he was badly flawed. Inveighing against the dangers threatening the Church[61] was a bizarre role for a man who rarely went to one, and yet who aspired to lead 'the Church Party'; and neither his freethinking nor his moral aberrations could recommend him as a potential prime minister to a strait-laced Queen. More serious for him and for the Tory party was that his transcendent talents were prey to an unstable temperament. Bolingbroke lacked ballast, and palpably lacked judgment. His bolt to the Pretender's court in 1715 is not incomprehensible to students of his character and previous record.

The other major statesman with whose fortunes Harley's were entwined was his predecessor as Lord Treasurer, the earl of Godolphin. In some respects Harley had much more in common with Godolphin, a veteran of pre-Revolution politics, than with St. John, whose debut on the Westminster stage was as late as 1701; for Godolphin was, like himself, a congenital moderate and a 'manager' rather than a partisan. Yet the two relationships ran strangely parallel in course, both beginning with a fruitful period of friendship and co-operation, and both ending with an epic quarrel and ultimately in Harley's fall from office. Henry Snyder's 1967 essay on the partnership between Harley and Godolphin from 1701–8 made the point that the latter's political acumen, and especially the painstaking care he took over

58. G. Holmes, 'Harley, St. John and the Death of the Tory Party' (1969: reprinted with postscript in *idem*, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679–1742* [1986]).

59. H. T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (1970).

60. Though his dominance over the Utrecht negotiations has been exaggerated: below, n. 80.

61. As below, pp. 54–5.

parliamentary management, has been underrated; and Godolphin's stature grew still further when the leading modern expert on post-Revolution finance pronounced him an outstanding head of the Treasury.[62] However, as with his co-'duumvir' of the years 1702–10, the duke of Marlborough, no secondary work yet exists in which one can study Godolphin's political influence half as well as in Snyder's vast three-volume edition of the two men's correspondence.[63]

Of the front-live leaders of the Whigs and the High Tories who figure prominently in the pages that follow, and in particular in chapters 7 and 8, only two – Nottingham and Somers – have been the subject of major published work in the past two decades.[64] Henry Horwitz's study of Nottingham, a model of its kind, is instructive on many counts. It contains the most valuable post-Walcott analysis of a major personal connexion in the early 18th century and an assessment of the shattering first effects on it of Nottingham's great apostasy in December 1711,[65] the desertion to the Whigs

62. H. L. Snyder, 'Godolphin and Harley: A Study of their Partnership in Politics', *H.L.Q.* 30 (1967); P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England . . . 1688–1756* (1967), pp. 58–64, 361. For Godolphin's management of Parliament see also H. L. Snyder, 'The Defeat of the Occasional Conformity Bill and the Tack', *Bull.I.H.R.* 41 (1968).

63. See Appendix, p. lxiii below. Books on Marlborough published since 1967 have concentrated on his military prowess. See I. F. Burton, *The Captain-General* (1968); Correlli Barnett, *Marlborough* (1974). Note, however (1) Snyder's re-examination of a vital incident in the weakening of the duumvirate's position with Queen Anne (cf. below, p. 190 n.*), 'The Duke of Marlborough's Request of his Captain-Generalship for Life', *Journ.Soc. Army Hist.Research*, 45 (1967); (2) the stress laid in some recent studies of early 18th-century politics on the sheer loathing which Marlborough, even more than Godolphin, came to inspire among most Tories after 1709, 'the Jacobite wing of the party especially because of his double-dealing with St. Germain'. E. Cruickshanks, 'Religion and Royal Succession: The Rage of Party, 1679–1760', in C. Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age of Party* (1987), p. 33; D. Szechi, *op. cit.* pp. 40, 107. My own references to Marlborough's relations with the Tories, even to their parliamentary attack on him in Jan. 1712 (e.g. below, pp. 142, 191, 297, 310), do not bring out this revulsion sufficiently clearly.

64. H. Horwitz, *Revolution Politicks: The Career of Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham* (Cambridge, 1968); W. L. Sachse, *Lord Somers: A Political Portrait* (Manchester, 1975). Scarcity of surviving papers is a problem, but enough material does exist to justify work on the third earl of Sunderland (see unpublished Univ. of California Ph.D. dissertation by H. L. Snyder [1963]) and on Lord Chancellor Cowper. My once-promised study of Wharton of the Junto has never, alas, got much further than the accumulation of notes. He is a glorious subject.

65. Cf. below, pp. 272–5, 334–5.

over 'No peace without Spain' which many contemporaries attributed to pique at the Queen's rejection of his claims to office but which Horwitz regards firmly as a matter of principle.[66] It also strongly reinforces the argument advanced below, that Nottingham's unique position in the hierarchy of the High Tories owed more to his unsullied standing as 'defender of the Church of England' than to electoral influence or the intricate web of family relationships in which he was placed.[67] In sharp contrast Lord Rochester,[68] widely acknowledged as *the* leader of the Tories at the end of William III's reign, lost much ground to Nottingham thereafter, and not least because he was seen to be exploiting religious issues to further his political aims and ambitions. The most interesting work done in recent years on the largest and most feared power-group in Augustan politics, the Whig Junto,[69] has been in article form rather than in Professor Sachse's lengthy 'political portrait' of Lord Somers.[70] Much of it has concentrated on the year of their peak influence in Anne's reign, 1709, which was also the year before their fall. We see how the tensions between 'the five lords' and Godolphin, and the bad blood between them and the Queen which had been a key element in court and parliamentary politics since 1706, persisted even in the noon day of their triumph. Godolphin's determination and cunning in fighting to preserve his own primacy, despite his apparent capitulation in 1708, is also made evident, and it is clear that the Junto's complaints about his continuing double-dealing in 1709 were not misplaced. Of course, the Junto lords were not immune from divisions among themselves; indeed in this very year there were some vulnerable salients in the apparently formidable front they presented to the Queen, her managers and the political world at large.[71] David Hayton has highlighted these, in particular a damaging if relatively short-lived breach of trust between Somers and Wharton in relation to the proposed repeal of the Test in Ireland, and in the same essay has taken further my reservations about

66. *Revolution Politicks*, pp. 229–34, 269; cf. below, pp. 198, 200 & n.

67. *Ibid.* p. 267. Horwitz contends – correctly, in my view – that Nottingham's influence was at its height in the six years or so following the death of Sir Christopher Musgrave and the collapse of Sir Edward Seymour's health in 1704–5.

68. See below, pp. 275–7 and *passim*.

69. See below, pp. 235–45, 288–91 and ch. 10, section I *passim*.

70. For my assessment of Sachse's earnest but rather unsatisfying book see the review in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 March 1976.

71. See below, pp. 237, 239.

the unanimity of the Whigs in their attitudes towards Church and Dissent.[72] It is not without irony that the party's ambivalence over the granting of full civil rights to Protestant nonconformists, which was to divide it more ostentatiously in 1719 and again in 1736, were already detectable to the close observer in 1709 – the very year that Dr. Henry Sacheverell, by trumpeting from St. Paul's pulpit the imminence of a total sell-out by the Whigs to the Puritan 'fanatics', set in train the sequence of events which led in less than a year to the Junto's rout.[73]

## The Substance of Politics

### I

Unscrupulous though they were, Sacheverell's words struck a responsive chord in the ears of a political nation conditioned to regard its parties in stereotype terms. Hence the *furor* they created. When I first sought out the political and religious issues and principles, as distinct from the more material considerations, which supplied the substance of conflict between the Tory and Whig parties of the age of Anne,[74] it was religious principle which appeared to me to provide 'the strongest threads of continuity' between the original parties of Charles II's reign and their post-Revolution successors. The Glorious Revolution, and still more the inaccurately-labelled 'Toleration Act' (1689),[75] inevitably led to some redefinition of the religious problem; but in reacting to it the partisans took sides from much the same basic motives that had characterized their reactions to a persecuted Dissent and an exclusive Anglican supremacy in the 1670s and 1680s. I have found no reason

72. See below, p. 105.

73. D. Hayton, 'Divisions in the Whig Junto in 1709: Some Irish Evidence', *Bull.I.H.R.* 55 (1982). Note also C. Jones, 'Godolphin, the Whig Junto and the Scots: a new Lords' Division-List from 1709' [on the disqualification of the duke of Queensberry], *Scottish Hist. Rev.* 58 (1979); H. L. Snyder, 'Queen Anne versus the Junto: The Effort to place Orford at the head of the Admiralty in 1709', *H.L.Q.* 35 (1972).

74. See below, chs. 2–3, pp. 51–115.

75. For the narrowness of this measure, which nowhere proclaimed a state of 'Toleration', see below, p. 62; G. Holmes, *Religion and Party in Late Stuart England* (1975), pp. 12–13.

subsequently to change this opinion or the view that the fervour with which the Whigs of Anne's reign undeviatingly upheld the Hanoverian Succession was fired by anti-Popery sentiments that differed little in strength from those of the Exclusionists, even if they were less hysterically expressed. That said, an account written two decades ago of the ideological heredity of the parties of Queen Anne's reign is bound to stand in some need of revision. Down to the 1960s historians *per se* had shown virtually no interest in the mainstream political ideologies of late 17th and 18th century England.[76] Even on the critical events of 1688–89, which unhinged so many of the theories and assumptions of the post-Restoration generation, very little of worth had been written outside doctoral theses since Trevelyan's brief study *The English Revolution* was published in 1938, elegantly but vacuously enshrining the last relics of Whig historiography.[77] Since 1967 not only has the political thinking of both Whigs and Tories been subjected to close scrutiny[78] but the Revolution Settlement, too, has been anatomized as never before.[79] Semantics have been pressed into service and the *O.E.D.* feverishly scanned for archaic meanings that might lurk behind well-known phrases in parliamentary motions or in the Declaration of Rights.

Little of this work has any relevance for the intrinsically new issues in post-Revolution politics, issues of foreign policy or questions arising essentially from the conduct of the wars against France or the making of the peace which had no true pre-Revolution pedigree. The content of that section of chapter 2 which is concerned with such issues has, I believe, survived the

76. the stimulating work of Caroline Robbins (see n. 126 below and *Two English Republican Tracts*, ed. Robbins [Cambridge, 1969]) was for a long time sadly undervalued, largely because it was concerned with the non-mainstream radical/republican tradition.

77. An honourable exception was Peter Laslett's redating of Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1960) to *c.* 1681 rather than the previously accepted 1689, a justly influential piece of scholarship.

78. Notably by J. P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles: The Politics of Party, 1689–1720* (Cambridge, 1977) and (ed.), *Halifax's Complete Works* (1969); H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (1977); M. A. Goldie, 'Tory Political Thought, 1689–1714' (Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. dissertation, 1977) and several articles (see e.g. n. 127 below). See also J. G. A. Pocock, *The Macchiavellian Moment* (Princeton, 1975), ch. 13 and *passim*.

79. By, among others, J. Carter (in Holmes [ed.], *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, 1969), J. R. Jones (1972), J. R. Western (1972), H. G. Horwitz (*Bull.I.H.R.* 47, 1974), R. Frankle (*Hist. Journ.* 17, 1974), J. P. Kenyon (in N. McKendrick [ed.], *Historical Perspectives*, 1974), L. G. Schwoerer (1981), J. Miller (*Hist. Journ.* 1982) and T. P. Slaughter (*Hist. Journ.* 1981, 1983).

years largely unscathed.[80] It is on some parts of chapter 3 that a lot of recent revisionism most directly impinges. For what have been mainly in question are party responses to the Revolution itself and party attitudes, then and thereafter, to those great divisive issues of principle of the period 1679–89: sovereignty and the source and nature of political authority; allegiance and obedience; rights and prerogatives.[81] A good deal to my surprise, the views on these questions I trustingly committed to print twenty years ago prove more resilient than might have been expected. One would certainly wish today to give more credit to the resourcefulness of Anglican-Tory theorists and polemicists in aiding their party's recovery from the shock of the Revolution.[82] It has been salutory, too, to be reminded that the Whigs also had their problems in adapting principles of government forged out of opposition to Catholic or crypto-Catholic autocrats to a more limited monarchical regime after 1689, which many of them were anxious to serve. And yet the impression the unwary might glean from some modern work[83] that the Revolution Settlement was, in ideological terms, not far short of being a Tory triumph and a Whig disaster must be sternly resisted.

The active rebellion of some Tories, albeit a small minority, in 1688; James II's flight; the disposal of the crown by Parliament and the terms on which it was settled – these events could not be anything but an acute embarrassment to the Tory conscience. The intellectual agility of a few clever and eloquent individuals like Simon Harcourt, Francis Atterbury and Offspring Blackall in re-locating sovereignty, by the early years of the 18th century, in 'the Legislative Power', 'the King in Parliament', in face-lifting the theory of Non-Resistance accordingly, and in isolating the traumatic events of 1688

80. But among a number of amplifying studies, note especially G. C. Gibbs, 'The Revolution in Foreign Policy', in Holmes (ed.), *op. cit.*, a most valuable essay; also H. T. Dickinson, 'The Tory Party's Attitude to Foreigners', *Bull.I.H.R.* 40 (1967) and 'The Poor Palatines and the Parties', *E.H.R.* 82 (1967); and two important reassessments of the Tory peace making of 1711–13, stressing (a) Lord Oxford's determination to supervise the negotiations throughout and (b) his efforts to procure a better deal for Britain's allies than they would have got from his assertive, anti-Dutch colleague, Bolingbroke: viz. A. D. MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace, 1710–13', in Holmes (ed.), *op. cit.*, and B. W. Hill, 'Oxford, Bolingbroke and the Peace of Utrecht', *Hist. Journ.* 16 (1973). See also Gregg, *Queen Anne*, pp. 339ff. L. J. Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, pp. 13–14, makes a spirited but thinly-substantiated defence of the Tories, before 1710, as Europeanists and supporters of the war.

81. See also pp. 58–64 below.

82. Cf. below, pp. 60–1.

83. From Kenyon's persuasive *Revolution Principles*, in particular: see, e.g., p. 146.

retrospectively as the 'exceptions' that proved the rule,[84] became an ideological convenience for the Hanoverian Tory group which took shape in the last two years of the Queen's reign.[85] But they must not be taken as a sure guide to general Tory thinking or to gut party feelings. The startling revival of Divine Right and Passive Obedience preaching and writing in Anne's reign, notably in and after the year 1708,[86] was a revival of the genuine article and not of some cosmetic new model. It can be directly linked with the upsurge of Jacobitism in the second half of Anne's reign and therefore (though this was not its sole source) with the agonizing uncertainties and equivocations which Tories unquestionably experienced as the Queen's life drew to a close.[87] As Mark Goldie rightly concludes,[88] the parliamentary dilemma of the Tories in 1713–14 was to a significant degree a reflection of their own ideological split – highlighted at the very height of their triumph during the Sacheverell affair in 1710 – between the new moderates of the 'conservative natural rights school' and the far more numerous High Church extremists of the old brew. Ironically it was in these later years of Anne, years of apparent party triumph, and not in the camouflaged circumstances of the early 1690s or of 1701–2 that the true extent of the damage which the Revolution wrought on Toryism was revealed.

Too much, perhaps, has been hung of late upon the arguments paraded by the protagonists at Sacheverell's trial. Important though these were,[89] they must not be taken out of their context, with all its inevitable special pleading. And if this is true of the Tories it is even more true of the Whigs. As I have suggested, it is very necessary to remember the inhibiting effect on the Whig prosecutors of the Queen's presence at every day of the trial. Even though she

84. Kenyon, *op. cit.* pp. 119–22, 136–8; Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, pp. 103–16; Holmes, *Trial*, pp. 180–5.

85. *The Lockhart Papers* (ed. A. Aufrere, 1817), i, 475–6; and see below, p. 94.

86. Bennett, *op. cit.* pp. 106–8; Holmes, *Trial*, pp. 33–4.

87. It now seems that in the House of Commons the dithering majority may have been somewhat larger and the committed pro-Hanover and Jacobite groupings rather smaller than I originally suggested. Cf. pp. 93–4, 336–7 below with E. Cruickshanks, 'The Tories and the Succession to the Crown in the 1714 Parliament', *Bull.I.H.R.* 46 (1973), pp. 177, 184–5, and D. Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–14.* (Edinburgh, 1984), ch. 8 and pp. 200–2.

88. Above, n. 78.

89. Cf. below, pp. 92–3, 96.

herself had joined the rebels at Nottingham in 1688 and readily admitted that she had a parliamentary title to the throne, as well as a hereditary one, Westminster Hall in 1710 was not the occasion for a party playing for high political stakes to bare its soul too nakedly.[90] Yet for an eminent scholar to dismiss the case against Sacheverell as a 'fiasco' seems a strange aberrration. Like the claim that ideologically 'the Whigs had shot their bolt' by 1710–14, it surely overstates their discomfort.[91]

The Revolution naturally reduced the intensity and changed the context of the central pre-1688 debate about the nature of government and the rights and obligations of the subject, but it did not by any means render it irrelevant. Much has been made of late of the alleged retreat of the post-Exclusion generation of Whig leaders and spokesmen towards positions of Establishment respectability and compromise. More and more as time went by, we are told, they backed away from Lockean principles, and not least from the theory that political authority was based on a 'contract'. Of course there is more than a little substance to this argument. But as the debates of both 1689 and 1710 plainly show, John Locke's rarified, cerebral variant was only one of several ways in which the politicians of the day envisaged a form of 'compact' between those who wielded authority and those from whom they claimed obedience; indeed, there were some versions of it which even found favour with Tories.[92] In any case Locke's idea of an *original* contract had never been much more than the ornamental trimming on Exclusionist ideology; and from the main basic ingredients of that ideology – government by consent, parliamentary (as opposed to divine, hereditary) kingship, and the right to resist authority in certain circumstances – there was no retreat, either after the Revolution or after William III's death. What the Whigs *did* rather than what they *said* is the surest guide to their principles; so that their unwavering support for the Protestant Succession as laid down by Parliament in 1689 and 1701, and their secret military preparations to resist the Pretender in 1714,[93] offer more persuasive evidence than tracts or treatises

90. See below, p. 97 and n.*; Holmes, *Trial*, pp. 138–40, speeches of Jekyll, Eyre, Walpole and Hawles.

91. Cf. L. Colley and M. Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', *Hist. Journ.* 22 (1979), p. 22; Kenyon, *op. cit.* p. 146.

92. E.g. Archbishop John Sharp of York and Francis Turner, nonjuring bishop of Ely.

93. See below, pp. 83–6, 97, 473 n. 66.

or odd extracts from their speeches.[94] That said, it would be perverse to ignore the impact of political tracts that are known to have been printed by the thousand and distributed widely; and in this respect, at least, the modern tendency to downgrade the influence of Locke's ideas, contract and all, on the post-Revolution Whigs has taken a hard knock from the ingenious researches of Ashcraft and Goldsmith.[95]

In the first edition of *British Politics in the Age of Anne* I took the then fairly orthodox view that one touchstone of Whig enthusiasm for the Hanoverian Succession, and conversely of their fear of a Franco-Jacobite *coup* via England's 'back-door' to the North, was the dominant part played by the Junto and its allies in carrying through the Union of England and Scotland. I also argued that although there was a tiny handful of occasions in Anne's reign when Whig leaders demonstrably sacrificed important party principles for the sake of party advantages or the prospect of power, their flirting with a Scottish attempt to undermine the Union in June 1713 was not one of them.[96] Much important work published since then on Anglo-Scottish relations and the making of the Union has left me unrepentant on both scores.[97] Every student of early 18th-century British politics should be thankful for the interest shown over the past twenty years in the politics of Scotland and for the manuscript harvest gathered into the Scottish Record Office which has done so much to stimulate it. However, even if its yield had been at my disposal in 1966 I could not have identified myself fully with the crushingly cynical view of the motives of the 'North Britons', at every turn, taken by Patrick Riley and William Ferguson in particular. What is more, if Riley had known his Westminster and Whitehall scene as thoroughly as that of Edinburgh, would he have stuck by his thesis that the Whig Junto, too, saw the necessity for the Union by 1705–6 purely in opportunistic terms? The

94. Thus it is impossible to quantify the impact of Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government* (described by Caroline Robbins [1947] as a 'textbook of revolution') in order to prove or disprove Kenyon's claim that from its publication in 1698, for over two decades, it was 'certainly much more influential than Locke's *Two Treatises*'. But one *can* quantify parliamentary motions, bills and division figures.

95. R. Ashcraft and M. M. Goldsmith, 'Locke, Revolution Principles and the Formation of Whig Ideology', *Hist. Journ.* 26 (1983).

96. See below, pp. 84–5, 113, 410.

97. For a detailed appraisal of the crisis of 1713 and the role of the Whigs in it, see G. Holmes and C. Jones, 'Trade, the Scots and the Parliamentary Crisis of 1713', *Parl. History*, 1 (1982), repr. in Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679–1742* (1986), pp. 109–38.

claim that they urged it forward with little else in mind than calculations of the future parliamentary balance is hard to sustain.[98]

One of the main reasons why the Whigs by 1713 were experiencing some disillusionment with the early political effects of the Union was the very large proportion of Scottish peers and M.P.s of the Episcopalian persuasion returned at the 1710 Election. The election of the sixteen representative peers had resulted in a clean sweep for the new Harley ministry's list of candidates and a serious defeat for the Junto's main allies across the border, the Squadrone, who did not in the end venture a poll. Of the 45 Scots returned to the House of Commons in 1710 nearly two-thirds were Tories. It was not only that Episcopal Tories were, from the Whig point of view, probable supporters of a hostile administration; still worse, many were known Jacobites. Daniel Szechi has calculated that 'committed Jacobites' captured some 16 Scottish seats, four times as many as in 1708, and suspected Jacobites a further four.[99] Szechi's study of *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–14* is an outstanding piece of scholarship and any student of the age of Anne seeking enlightenment from the present work on the Succession as an issue in British politics during the Queen's last years, on the Jacobites as an independent political grouping (which Szechi convinces us they were long before the 1714 session),[100] and on the history of the Tories generally in that period,[101] would be well advised to use the two books in tandem.

It is well known that the earl of Oxford maintained contact with the Pretender, through Gaultier, Torcy and the French Court, throughout much

98. P. W. J. Riley, 'The Union of 1707 as an Episode in English Politics', *E.H.R.* 84 (1969). See also *idem, William III and the Scottish Politicians* (Edinburgh, 1979) and *The Union of England and Scotland* (Manchester, 1978); W. Ferguson, 'The Making of the Treaty of Union of 1707', *Scottish Hist. Rev.* 43 (1964); *idem, Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977). For a balanced, less bilious view of the events leading up to the Union, see the elegant essay by Christopher Smout, 'The Road to Union', in Holmes (ed.), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution* (1969). Space does not allow me to develop my case against Riley here. Readers must, I fear, await the chapter on 'The Uniting of Britain: Scotland and England, 1690–1727', chapter 20 of my book *The Making of a Great Power: Pre-industrial Britain, 1660–1783*, to be published as vol. 3 of Longmans' series 'Foundations of Modern Britain'.

99. Szechi, *op. cit.* pp. 67, 202.

100. Cf. below, pp. 279–80 and *passim*.

101. Its excellent treatment of the October Club, in which Jacobite M.P.s like Charles Eversfield played a front-line role has been mentioned already (above, n. 44, and cf. pp. 116–17, 251–2 and 342–4 below). It is also illuminating on the inscrutably devious manoeuvres of Harley.

of his ministry; and this has tempted some historians to suspect him of playing a double game and of insincerity in his frequent professions of loyalty to the House of Hanover.[102] I have always acquitted him of such treachery, while harbouring some doubts (as Oxford himself certainly did) about the intentions – in 1714 at least – of his rival, Bolingbroke.[103] Szechi subjects the Tory administration's relations with the Jacobites, in Britain and in France, to intense scrutiny. In doing so he not simply supports the acquittal of Oxford with overwhelming evidence but at the same time constructs a convincing thesis about the Jacobites' central political strategy in the last four years of Anne and the reasons for its failure. The Pretender's adherents at Westminster remained convinced for much of the period from early 1711 to July 1714 that his peaceful restoration after the Queen's death was a realistic possibility. Because the Oxford ministry was so frequently harassed by its own truculent backbenchers, and latterly by Cabinet feuds, the Jacobites calculated that they could trade off their debating talent and their well-marshalled votes against a firm ministerial undertaking to repeal the Act of Settlement. That their strategy failed was partly due to two serious miscalculations: their belief that Anne's own sympathies were privately with her half-brother, which emphatically they were not,[104] and their hope that a Catholic prince would ultimately see the wisdom of accepting a *politique* conversion to Protestantism to appease the bulk of the Anglican Tories, an illusion which was finally and bleakly dispelled in April 1714. The main reason for their failure, however, as Szechi skilfully demonstrates, was that the Pretender himself destroyed their freedom of parliamentary manoeuvre by ordering them to put their votes at Oxford's disposal. As I have recently remarked,[105] 'in a career noted for sleight of hand, no conjuring trick proved more valuable to Oxford than the one which in 1711 convinced James Stuart that the prime minister was wholeheartedly in his interest. Not until early in 1714 did the Pretender finally acknowledge that he had been duped and

102. E.g. see E. Gregg, *Queen Anne*, pp. 374–9.

103. See below, pp. 84–6, 260, 268 & n.†, 270, 279–80. Oxford's sympathies *after* his fall from power, and especially after his two-year confinement in the Tower (1715–17), are a different matter however. The sincerity of his Jacobite intrigues in George I's reign may have been more genuine, though even about this modern scholars are not agreed. Cf. G. V. Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, ch. 11, *passim*, and E. Cruickshanks, 'Religion and Royal Succession', *loc. cit.* (n. 63 above) pp. 35-6.

104. On this question see Edward Gregg's unanswerable case in 'Was Queen Anne a Jacobite?', *History*, 57 (1972).

105. *T.L.S.* 1 Feb. 1985, p. 125.

remove the whip from his frustrated parliamentary party'. By then irrecoverable opportunities had been missed and time all too quickly ran out for the Jacobites on 1 August, when Anne's death left all their plans in ruins.[106]

## II

Of all the ideological luggage carried over from pre-Revolution England to the reigns of the last two Stuarts, only one set became thoroughly jumbled. The traumatic last year of James II's reign had badly shaken the Tories' belief in both the sanctity and the efficacy of the royal prerogative. This became evident initially in their attitude to the constitutional settlement of 1689.[107] But the change of ruler from a Divine Right Catholic to a Calvinist Dutchman with a title to the throne which most Tories could only regard as *de facto* made them still readier to jettison their old scruples. Hence 'one of the most curious metamorphoses in post-Revolution politics' which I observed in the age of Anne – 'the gradual reconciliation in the Tory mind of anti-prerogative attitudes with sound Anglican principles'.[108] Further than that, however, and surely one of the most striking differences between the pre- and post-Revolution parties, is the degree to which, once it ceased to enjoy a monopoly of royal favour, the Tory party succeeded in rifling much of that broader wardrobe of 'Country' clothes which had hitherto been largely

106. In Dr. Szechi's view (*op. cit.* pp. 190–1), and also in that of G. V. Bennett ('English Jacobitism, 1710–1715: Myth and Reality', *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.* 5th Ser., 32, 1982, pp. 145–6), Bolingbroke was also insincere in his own overtures to St. Germain, certainly after the Pretender's refusal to change his religion. Nevertheless, it seems clear that because of his greater recklessness and his determination to win over the parliamentary Jacobite group to his own cause he was more deeply 'dipped' than his rival. His most distinguished biographer agrees: 'while Bolingbroke, just as much as Oxford, insisted that nothing could be done until the Pretender changed his religion, he was more sympathetic to Jacobitism than Oxford ever was. H. T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 118 and pp. 119–35, *passim*. For the views of two other recent historians of Jacobitism on both Tory party and ministerial attitudes to the Pretender's cause prior to August 1714, see E. Cruickshanks, *Political Untouchables* (1979), p. 3; B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689–1746* (1980), pp. 111–14.

107. See the articles by Horwitz and Frankle, cited above, n. 79.

108. Below, p. 120. Thus in a speech in 1698 Sir Bartholomew Shower effortlessly combined protestations of his devotion to the Church with a sheaf of 'Reasons for a New Bill of Rights'. J. H. Plumb, *Growth of Political Stability*, p. 140n.

(though not exclusively) the property of the Whigs, as the erstwhile party of opposition.

At much the same time as I was developing this theme in the mid-1960s and attempting to identify the men, the mentality and the measures which perpetuated a 'Country tradition' into the age of Anne,[109] Professor Plumb was taking the point still further. He argued that the years 1694–8 'witnessed the marriage of Tory politicians to a [Harley-inspired] political programme that was critical not only of the acts of government but also of the whole constitutional position'. By 1710 the Tory party had 'acquired a recognizable *persona*, based largely on the independently-minded squire's idea of himself, a patriotic *persona*, barely distinguishable from that of a Country-Whig opposition to the Court in the 1670s'.[110] And the Tories' new habiliments were all the more striking, Plumb contended, when set against the new Whig image of a party 'closely identified with both aristocracy and government', committed to the financing of full-scale war and deeply concerned with the exploitation of patronage to preserve its power. It would be natural to deduce from this that the Country platform essentially moved house, with all its props, from one party to another – along with the Harley-Foley group of Whigs,[111] who also acted as removal contractors. Yet it would now be accepted by most scholars that a 'Country interest' made up of both Whig and Tory critics of William III's ministry would have come together in the early 1690s even without Harley;[112] while the evidence is no less convincing today than it seemed to me in 1966 that the tradition of Country opposition remained a bipartisan one during Anne's reign, as it had been under William III.

Three important studies of the past ten years all confirm that

109. See below, ch. 4, pp. 116–47; G. Holmes, 'The Attack on "the Influence of the Crown", 1702–16', *Bull.I.H.R.* 39 (1966), repr. *idem*, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679–1742* (1986), pp. 35–56.

110. 'The Tory, apart from public issues', he wrote, 'stood for free and frequent elections, sharp punishment for bribery and electoral corruption, low taxation, financial rectitude, accountability to Parliament, the exclusion of all place-holders and sound land-qualification for Members.' Plumb, *op. cit.*, pp. 140, 151–2; see also pp. 140–52 *passim*.

111. See below, pp. 259–61.

112. See, *inter alia*, L. Colley and M. Goldie, 'Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', *Hist. Journ.* 22 (1979), p. 246; J. A. Downie, 'The Commission of Public Accounts and the formation of the Country Party', *E.H.R.* 91 (1976), especially the important point on p. 35, emphasising Harley's relatively junior status in the years 1691–94.

conclusion.[113] H. T. Dickinson lucidly analyses the ideological soil which made possible those temporary alliances and nurtured those parliamentary measures which I discuss in chapter 4. Readers should not be puzzled by occasional discrepancies between the aura of altruism and unanimity of motive with which he tends to endow the Country campaigns of the period and my evident reservations on this score: it is hard for the historian of ideas not to idealize the practice of politics. Colin Brooks's contribution to the debate, thoughtful and original though it is, is still more vulnerable on that count; for in his attempt to delineate what he calls a Country 'political persuasion' in post-Revolution England[114] his explicit aim is not merely to differentiate ideas but 'to separate values, emotional ties *from behaviour*'.[115] This is indeed a delicate operation, and a chancy one, and it not infrequently results in euphoric conclusions about the 'components' of this 'persuasion' which are well adrift from the common clay reality of many of the individual politicians who supported Country measures in practice.[116] Unfortunately one cannot side-step such questions as, what became of Country high-mindedness when members were faced with evidence of flagrant malpractice by representatives of their own party in disputed election cases? Not for nothing, as Professor Speck has reminded us, was the Commons' Committee of Elections called by one backbencher 'the most corrupt council

113. H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 83–5, 102–16; D. Hayton, 'The "Country" interest and the party system, 1689–*c.* 1720', in C. Jones (ed.), *Party and Management*, pp. 37–85; C. Brooks, 'The Country Persuasion and Political Responsibility in England in the 1690s', *Parliament, Estates and Representation*, 4 (1984). His title notwithstanding, Brooks's profile of a Country member has an obvious relevance for the reigns of Anne and George I also, a relevance he emphasises by pointed references to chapter 4 below.

114. How the political scientists' notion of a 'persuasion' differs in concept from the 'Country mentality' whose characteristics I sought to ascertain (below, pp. 119–26, 129–30) is unclear to me.

115. *Loc. cit.* p. 138: my italics.

116. E.g. the first three of Dr. Brooks's six 'components', viz. an outlook that was 'profoundly provincial', a 'sense of place', and the habit of viewing the whole of England as if it were 'an estate', requiring honest and frugal administration, imply an equation of the Country M.P. with an independent country gentleman; and yet, as both I (pp. 120, 222–3, 340–1 below) and David Hayton have pointed out, any analysis of those who supported Country policies at once rules out such an easy stereotype. To take but one of many exceptions: Sir John Cropley M.P. (see Index below), as the son of a London merchant permanently resident in Red Lion Square, can hardly have been fired by strong provincial loyalty, 'sense of place' or the experience of caring for a large landed estate.

in Christendom'.[117] The chief merit of the Brooks thesis lies in underlining the positive and salubrious side of the true Country politician's aims and motives rather than the negative elements of mistrust and cynicism which every ministry, to some degree, inspired;[118] its chief defect is to ignore the skeletons in the Country cupboard or, at best, to accord them a brief and nonchalant recognition before locking them hastily away out of sight.[119]

By contrast, one of the great strengths of David Hayton's essay on 'the Country Interest' of the years 1689-1720 lies in dragging these same skeletons from their murky hiding places. He recognizes the scores of politicians, both Tory and Whig, who took up Country causes when it suited them, 'acting the patriot' either to pursue factious ends or to work off a grudge against particular ministers or to promote personal ambition. In the latter category he notes especially how often a cluster of gifted young men on the way up – the 'young sparks . . . anxious to cut a figure' in the Commons – flirted extravagantly with popular and patriotic causes, doubtless in the belief (usually justified) that this would increase their bargaining power with their own leaders or the Queen's managers.[120] While I hint at this phenomenon, Hayton exposes it brilliantly and drives home the point with impressive division-list evidence.[121] His essay is the most persuasive exercise in the re-interpretation of a major political theme of this period for well over a decade. He shows, among much else, that while the Tories provided the bulk of the numbers, the 'infantry' as he puts it, of the Country forces in the late 1690s and the first two decades of the next century, it was 'Old Whigs' (with a few exceptions, notably Davenant) who were the chief ideologists and propagandists.[122] For good measure Hayton's work illuminates the structure

117. See C. Jones (ed.), *op. cit.* pp. 107–21; cf. below, pp. 42–4, 145–6.

118. But see also below, pp. 118, 123, 125. Brooks misleads when he claims (*loc. cit.* p. 135) that I 'fell back in conclusion into characterizing "the investigation of government accounts and administrative abuses" as "unhealthy"'. What I in fact see as unhealthy is the way a once wholesome Country cause was in Anne's reign (e.g. in 1711–12) shamelessly exploited by party men for party ends.

119. E.g. Brooks, *loc. cit.* p. 143, para 4.

120. Hayton, *loc. cit.* (n. 113), p. 53.

121. Perhaps he errs just too far at times on the side of cynicism. His treatment of Stanhope's and King's roles in the 'Whimsical' proceedings of 1705–7 is an instance (*loc. cit.* pp. 50–1; cf. below, pp. 131–3). Similarly his suggestion of a 'Junto conspiracy' to set up the struggle for the place clause in the Regency Bill so as to put pressure on Godolphin (p. 51) seems to me inherently improbable and inconsistent with solid evidence to the contrary.

122. *Loc. cit.* pp. 55–6.

as well as the content of politics, not only supporting my contention that the true Country Whigs had become a dwindling rump by Anne's reign but demonstrating that their shrinkage was even more drastic than I had imagined, and probably began as early as 1699.[123]

If the Whigs of the age of Anne were clinging on only tenuously to their predecessors' role as a Country party (so tenuously that in 1716 only 33 Whig members out of 340 could be found to vote against the Septennial Bill and for the Old Whig principle of frequent Parliaments),[124] still less, it may be thought, did they fill the bill as a *radical* party. The distinction is not a simple one; for whereas there was an active and vocal band of Whigs before 1688 convinced that after the excesses of Charles II and his brother the health and pristine purity of the body politic could only be restored by root-and-branch reforms, after the Revolution 'radicals' and 'Country-men'[125] did share a good deal of common ground as to the practical measures that were necessary to achieve reform. This is one reason why twenty years ago I was not convinced that a separate radical tradition played any significant part in the stuff of central politics in the age of Anne. The other reason is a historiographical one. It is only in the very recent past that a few historians of post-Revolution England have begun to show serious interest in taking up the baton handed on by Caroline Robbins,[126] treating the residual radical or 'commonwealth' element among the Whigs which survived the Glorious Revolution as matter for profitable investigation.[127] Mark Goldie, in particular, has stressed the bitter disillusionment of the 'True Whigs' with the work of the Convention Parliament, and not least with the alleged

123. *Loc. cit.* pp. 47–8, 50–3; cf. below, pp. 220–3. Hayton challenges a number of my ascriptions of individual M.P.s as 'Country Whigs', and except in a few cases (e.g. Sir Richard Onslow) his evidence for doing so is impressive.

124. See above, pp. xiii–xiv.

125. The former is a historian's rather than a contemporary expression, a convenience for labelling those Whigs prepared for fundamental change in the constitutional, political and (as some believed) electoral system.

126. C. Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959). See also above, n. 76.

127. Note especially M. Goldie, 'The Roots of True Whiggism, 1689–94', *History of Political Thought*, 1 (1980); also L. G. Schwoerer, '*No Standing Armies!*' (Baltimore, 1976), ch. 8; A. B. Worden (ed.), *A Voyce from the Watch Tower: Part Five: 1660–1662* (Camden Soc. 4th ser., 21, 1978), Introduction; J. A. G. Pocock (ed.), *The Political Works of James Harrington* (Cambridge, 1977), Historical Introduction, ch. 7. More recently H. T. Dickinson has contributed a valuable essay, 'The Precursors of Political Radicalism in Augustan Britain', to C. Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750* (1987).

betrayal of the party's old principles over the formula agreed for the settlement of the crown and over the terms of the Declaration of Rights.[128] The radicals, small in number in Parliament but influential and conscious of themselves as guardians of the Whig conscience, could not forgive the 'Court Whigs' (prominent among whom were Somers and Wharton) for a compromise which we can recognize was unavoidable but which they saw as shameful apostasy; and they never again trusted either the 'New Right' of their own party or the new King. Even though the one-time republicanism of the more extreme parliamentary radicals had now been transmuted into reluctant acceptance of the institution of kingship, that was deemed tolerable only within a constitutional framework set by sovereign and regularly re-elected Parliaments, a secularized and contractual monarchy with a shackled prerogative, and an unquestioned right of resistance for the subject. Despite the deaths of veteran leaders such as Hampden, Birch and Wildman, these 'True Whigs' or Commonwealthmen recovered their dynamic in the late 1690s under the intellectual leadership of John Toland and Samuel Johnson. Though strongly supporting the parliamentary attacks on the standing army and on William's land grants, they did so from an ideological position distinct from that of the Whig dissidents in Harley's New Country party who led those campaigns, and who were now sliding into ever closer association with the Tories.[129]

It must be said that during Anne's reign, as such, apart from a few more literary and propagandist flurries[130] and occasional discreet pressure on Harley, the voice of 'True' Whiggery was strangely muted. And one revealing yardstick of this is the rapidly declining influence of Whig radicals in what had long been their chief extra-parliamentary stronghold, the City of London. There, as we now know, Whiggery during the years 1689-1714 became increasingly dominated by an establishment group of wealthy aldermen, in cahoots with the Junto, while ironically the populist image

128. For the tussle over the latter, see L. G. Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights, 1689* (Baltimore & London, 1981); articles by Horwitz and Frankle, cited above, n. 79.

129. See below, p. 259. The radicals' ideological position was cemented by a startling sequence of publications of neo-republican texts in the years 1697–1700: not only Harrington's *Oceana* – their bible – but Milton's *Works*, Sidney's *Discourses*, and Ludlow's *Memoirs* (edited and orchestrated by Toland).

130. E.g. Robert Molesworth's *The Principles of a Real Whig* (1711). For a useful extract see H. T. Dickinson, *Politics and Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (1974).

was slowly appropriated by the Tories.[131] Nevertheless, after the dissolution of the Junto early in George I's reign the radical whig tradition did re-surface in a modified form, through the writings of Trenchard and Gordon, among others.[132] After the early 1690s there was never anything but a tiny, dedicated, vocal minority to carry the torch (they appealed to the Whig conscience in a way not unlike the influence of the nonjurors on the right-wing conforming Tories). Moreover their *popular* base – and this needs to be stressed – was at this stage almost negligible, especially outside the capital. Yet their ideas deserve a modest place in any up-to-date account of the substance of early 18th-century Whiggery.[133]

## III

There can be no doubt that a Country programme of reform, including measures welcome to genuine radicals, acquired extra bite and attracted additional support in the years after 1689 as a result of the long wars against the France of Louis XIV. Thus war swelled the ranks of the civil office-holders as well as the armed forces, thereby stimulating the enthusiasm for 'place' legislation. It also increased opportunities for peculation (for example, the abuse of army and navy contracts) and roused the anger of a tax-harried legislature against corruption and those who practised it. The astringency which war lent to the disputes between Country and Court was far surpassed, however, by the bitterness it injected into the struggle between Whigs and Tories. And this was not simply because of the issues of policy and principle it threw up directly.[134] but also because of the new economic pressures it exerted on British society and its aggravation of some already-existing pressures. Earlier we observed its baleful effects on the

131. G. S. De Krey, 'Political Radicalism in London after the Glorious Revolution', *Journ. Mod. Hist.* 55 (1983); *idem, A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688–1715* (Oxford, 1985).

132. Robbins, *op. cit.*; Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, ch. 5.

133. By the 1740s it was not only in London that the radical initiative was slipping to the Tories. See L. J. Colley, 'Eighteenth-Century Radicalism before Wilkes', *Trans. R.Hist.Soc.* 5th ser., 31 (1981).

134. See above, pp. xxx–i and n. 80.

Anglican clergy.[135] Scores of London merchants and shippers found their profits seriously diminished by enemy action and high insurance premiums; and many were only too happy to divert their capital into ventures less hazardous than the trades with Spain, the Levant or the West Indies. A joint-stock boom, a radically new system of government credit finance and the establishment of a state bank, all before 1696,[136] provided their opportunity. There was no such solace for hard-hit landowners and farmers. The general level of landed rents was already depressed in many areas even before 1689. Thereafter the wartime land tax and the difficulty of finding tenants – at least, good tenants – in a period marked by violent harvest fluctuations piled up further problems on the 'mere' gentry in stiffly-taxed arable counties. The more overburdened and embarrassed among them thus became singularly ripe for political exploitation; and it was Tory leaders and polemicists who eagerly exploited them, playing on their anxieties and on their resentment against the 'monied' profiteers of the new 'financial revolution'. For the latter, like those other wartime bugbears of the landed interest, army officers and bureaucrats, could conveniently be linked with Whiggish policies and politicians. Thus was a powerful dose of the toxic of social conflict introduced into the substance of politics, especially in the middle and later years of Anne.

'The Clash of Interests', the chapter of *British Politics in the Age of Anne* which analysed this conflict and assessed its political importance, has weathered the intervening years less well than the rest. A high tide of new research into the economy, finance and society has left its timbers somewhat battered. The City of London's financial and trading community has been closely studied since 1967, beginning in that year with the publication of Dickson's classic study of the revolution in public finance.[137] A vast amount more has been learned in the last twenty years about the problems and opportunities confronting landowners in the late 17th and early 18th

135. See above, p. xxi.
136. See below, pp. 152–5.
137. P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution* (n. 62 above), chs. 1, 2, 11; D. W. Jones, 'London Merchants and the Crisis of the 1690s', in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns* (1970); R. Grassby, 'English Merchant Capitalism in the Late 17th Century', *Past and Present* 46 (1970); B. W. Hill, 'The Change of Government and the "Loss of the City", 1710–1711', *Econ. H.R.* 24 (1971); G. S. De Krey, *A Fractured Society* (see n. 131 above), chs. 1, 3–6.

centuries,[138] and we understand better how 'the new taxation' worked and where and how deeply it bit.[139] Some progress has been made, too, towards a clearer comprehension of both the scale and social implications of the rise of 'the military men' and of the rapid growth of the civil service.[140] In the remainder of this Introduction, with these new maps and compasses to guide us, we shall re-trace the ground first covered in chapter 5[141] and enquire how far the arguments and conclusions of that initial survey stand in need of revision.

In 1969 William Speck was able to draw upon Dickson's authoritative work on finance as well as on Clay's doctoral research into Hertfordshire and East Anglian landowners to readdress the question 'was the conflict between the landed and the monied interests . . . a myth or a reality?' and to assess how seriously it threatened the stability of the Augustan political system.[142] He concluded, as I did, that the reality was beyond question but laid still greater stress on the gravity of its political effects down to 1713. His beautifully argued essay remains to this day an indispensable complement to chapter 5. As a corrective its principal importance lay in defining more

138. The recent literature on landownership in our period is voluminous, with the most prolific contributions coming from Sir John (H.J.) Habakkuk, J. V. Beckett, C. G. A. Clay and B. A. Holderness. Most of the relevant periodical and thesis material can be found among the footnote references in Beckett's 'The Pattern of Landownership in England and Wales, 1660–1880', *Econ. H.R.* 37 (1984). See also Beckett's *The Aristocracy in England, 1660–1914* (Oxford, 1986), ch. 2, Clay's 'Landlords and Estate Management in England', ch. 14 of Joan Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, V.ii (1640–1750), the parallel chapter (15) on Wales, by D. W. Howell, and two valuable book-length studies: P. Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets, 1640–1760* (Oxford, 1980) and P. Jenkins, *The Making of a Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry, 1640–1790* (Cambridge, 1985). Also of relevance to the 'conflict of interests' is N. Rogers, 'Money, Land and Lineage: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', *Social Hist.* 4 (1979).

139. See C. Brooks, 'Public Finance and Political Stability: the administration of the Land Tax, 1688–1720', *Hist. Journ.* 17 (1974); J. V. Beckett, 'Local Custom and the "New Taxation" in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Northern Hist.* 12 (1976); *id.*, 'Land Tax or Excise: the levying of taxation in seventeeth- and eighteenth-century England', *E.H.R.* 100 (1985).

140. G. E. Aylmer, 'From office-holding to civil service: the genesis of the modern bureaucracy', *Trans.R.Hist.Soc.* 30 (1980); G. Holmes, *The Professions and Social Change in England, 1680–1730*, 1979 Raleigh Lecture (1981); *id.*, *Augustan England* (see n. 39), chs. 8, 9 and Bibl. Notes, pp. 313–18.

141. Below, pp. 148–82.

142. W. A. Speck, 'Conflict in Society', in G. Holmes (ed.), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution* (1969).

strictly than I had done the terms of both the historiographical and the contemporary debates. Whereas I had concerned myself with the political allegiances of, and attitudes towards, 'businessmen' in a wide sense[143] – including manufacturers, domestic traders, contractors and overseas merchants as well as large stock- and fund-holders, brokers, private bankers and other financiers – Speck emphasised that 'the monied interest', as such, was a term used very precisely by contemporaries: referring 'not to traders and merchants in general, but to those elements in society who were involved in the new machinery of public credit . . .'[144] On the other side of the fence, while I was at pains to stress that the war years between 1702 and 1713 were 'a grim period for those middling and small gentry whose income was derived solely, or almost exclusively, from their rents', adding that 'the distinction between them and their more fortunate [landed] brethren is . . . quite basic', Speck maintained that in contemporary eyes membership of 'the landed *interest*' and exclusive dependence on rents were synonymous.[145]

If there are occasions in chapter 5 when I use the term 'monied man' too loosely, it is now clear that there are almost as many pitfalls in a usage that is over-strict. One reason why the post-Revolution 'conflict of interests' generated so much heat yet so little light is that the older social and economic groups in early 18th-century England, such as the gentry (Whigs as well as Tories), the yeomanry, the clergy, and even members of the established professions, found it difficult to analyse with any true precision that 'new interest'[146] which had burst on the scene only since 1688, accumulating so much wealth so rapidly and encroaching in the process on traditional political preserves. When I remark that 'moneyed man' was 'a pejorative expression which . . . often meant different things to different people'[147] I under- rather than overplay the ambiguity. Swift, like other Tory propagandists, found it convenient to pretend (indeed, may have partly believed) that there was a novel and discrete breed of 'retailers of money' which was wholly the product of the financial revolution inaugurated in 1693–4; which was (of course!) Whig in politics, warmongering, and electorally invasive. But the truth was infinitely more complex.

143. See below, p. 151.
144. *Loc. cit.* p. 135.
145. *Ibid*; cf. below, p. 157.
146. Bodl.MS.Eng.Misc.e.180, f.4: Henry St. John to Lord Orrery, 9 July 1709.
147. Below, p. 151.

Just a few examples of this complexity must suffice. In the first place, there were relatively few big City investors in Bank of England, East India or South Sea stock in the years 1694–1714 who were not also heavily involved in one or more other branches of business activity; and this was almost as true of the immigrant Dutch, Flemish and Huguenot business communities as of the native English. Nor, as Dickson has shown,[148] were there more than a small number of men dealing in the market in Anne's reign who were stockbrokers or jobbers pure and simple. Such notorious operators as 'Vulture' Hopkins and William Sheppard who made fortunes out of handling transactions on the market were far outnumbered by bankers or merchants for whom the jobbing trade was a profitable sideline. Furthermore, the big government creditors and the leading stockholders and directorates of both the Bank and the New (later the United) East India Company and South Sea Company were quite heavily dominated by City tycoons who had built up their capital originally through overseas commerce, or occasionally through domestic trade or manufacture. They frequently maintained a heavy commitment to one or the other, and in some cases even to both.[149] Above all, as the work of D. W. Jones and Gary De Krey has amply demonstrated, *merchant* wealth was not only crucial to the beginnings of the financial revolution – in the shape, especially, of the spare capital of the Iberian wine merchants and the West India traders[150] – but vital to its continuance. Even that quintessential 'monied man' Sir Gilbert Heathcote[151] never ceased trading, either to the Baltic or across the Atlantic, during the wars, and he continued to do so with renewed energy after they were over. Thus the distinction Henry St. John carefully drew for the benefit of his party's backbenchers, between those men of capital helping to create national wealth through foreign or domestic trade, who were to be applauded, and those simply living off that wealth like parasites, who were to be deplored,[152] was always a largely artificial one.

148. *Financial Revolution*, ch. 20, *passim*.

149. E.g. Sir Owen Buckingham, M.P. (see below, p. 522), salter, sail manufacturer and merchant trading both to the Baltic and the West Indies.

150. Modern research has fully endorsed the verdict in 1694 of that keen contemporary observer of the economy, John Houghton: that 'trade being so obstructed at sea, few that had money were willing it should be idle', and that merchants found the new joint stocks especially attractive because capital invested in them was so readily retrievable 'whensoever they had occasion'. See Jones, 'London Merchants', *op. cit.* p. 334.

151. See below, pp. 156, 174; also an Iberian merchant.

152. See below, p. 169.

Apart from those whose business pedigrees went back long before the Revolution (notably the goldsmith-bankers), the only important groups of City financiers who could be slotted neatly into St. John's pigeon-hole for the monied interest were the small number of full-time stockjobbers and the community of Sephardi Jews settled at Hampstead and Highgate. The wealthier of the latter certainly invested hugely in Bank and loan stock and their international tentacles and alien habits of life and worship made them an object of particular suspicion. Although they played no part in parliamentary or even civic affairs, Jewish financiers were thought to have exerted behind-the-scenes influence on the Godolphin ministry of 1702–10, a faint foreshadowing of the unpopularity of the Pelhams' *eminence grise*, Samson Gideon, in the reign of George II and of the outcry over the Jew Bill of 1753.[153]

Another aspect of the monied interest which flawed the neat symmetry of the image beloved of Tory propagandists was that London's private bankers and scriveners, two of the prime representatives of those 'lender[s] of money' against whom St. John directed his fire, 'who added nothing to the common stock . . . and contributed not a mite to the public charge',[154] neither constituted a 'new interest' nor, for the most part, a Whig one. G. S. De Krey has shown us how by the first two decades of the 18th century the leadership of the Tory party in London politics, while including some merchants, was dominated by domestic traders, industrialists (notably brewers) and, above all, money-lenders: 'the Tory money-lenders were at the heart of their party after 1702'.[155] Of the thirty-odd private bankers still in business by the latter half of Anne's reign, the great majority were Tory in politics and the two biggest, Sir Richard Hoare and Sir Francis Child, were prominent in Parliament. Among the few Whigs in the banking fraternity, two – George Caswall and John Blunt – went over to Harley after the ministerial *renversement* of 1710, and only the veteran Sir Robert Clayton, who died in 1707, had dabbled much in Bank of England stock or government securities. As for the scriveners, London poll books reveal that

153. Dickson, *op. cit.* p. 263; L. S. Sutherland, 'Samson Gideon: Eighteenth-Century Jewish Financier', in *idem*, *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. Newman (1984), pp. 387–98; T. W. Perry, *Public Opinion, Propaganda and Politics . . .: a Study of the Jew Bill of 1753* (Harvard, 1962).

154. *A Letter to Sir William Wyndham*, pp. 27–8.

155. G. S. De Krey, *A Fractured Society*, p. 126.

as a livery they were overwhelmingly Tory in their inclinations.[156]

There is yet a further gap that we can now perceive between Tory myth and the reality elucidated by modern scholarship. Historians have generally been prone to exaggerate, as contemporaries did, the amount of big business capital committed to the non-corporate funded loans floated by successive governments from 1693 to 1712. 'The Funds', most typically supporting annuities for lives or for 99 years,[157] were excellent investments for those of small or medium capital; but they could not offer the advantage of liquidity, nor indeed the prospect of large capital gains, to tempt many top-flight merchants and financiers.[158] Furthermore, a significant number of fundholders were provincials. And this, not least of all, sets them apart from the biggest stockholders and directors of the great financial and commercial corporations of the day who were the true core of the monied interest. Dickson's investigation of the English financial revolution[159] revealed two aspects of this core which go far to explain the acute friction that developed between those who dominated and dealt in the major corporate stocks and the aggrieved cohorts of the landed interest. Firstly, the heart of the 'monied interest' was overwhelmingly a London phenomenon: only three of the 74 men who held £5000 or more of Bank stock before the new subscription in 1709 were domiciled outside the capital or the Home Counties. Secondly, it had a remarkably large alien component, very substantial blocks of stock in both the Bank and the New and United East India Companies being held not only by Jews but by Protestant immigrants from the Continent. What is more, many were first generation arrivals and not a few of these achieved scintillating success in the City – men such as Sir Theodore Jansen, whose meteoric rise from the late 1680s was ended only by the South Sea Bubble.[160] The anonymous squire who complained to Robert Harley in March 1702 that the result of

156. See, e.g., W. A. Speck, *Tory and Whig*, p. 118. Even more than the goldsmith-bankers, the scriveners saw in the emergence of a state bank and a whole range of marketable 'gilt-edged' securities a serious threat to their traditional role as brokers, mortgagees and moneylenders.

157. But from 1710–12 a variety of lottery prizes.

158. Dickson, *op. cit.* pp. 61, 262.

159. See also Alice C. Carter's pamphlet, *The English Public Debt in the 18th Century* (1968).

160. See below, pp. 157, 531. He is said to have come to England with £10,000 in his pocket after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Carter, *op. cit.* p. 17.

161. H.M.C. *Portland MSS.* viii, 96.

recent Treasury policies had been 'to enrich Dutch, Jews, French and other foreigners, scoundrel stock-jobbers and tally-jobbers who have been sucking our vitals for many years'[161] undoubtedly had a point.

Weighing just as heavily with the Tory 'men of estates' was the fact that, apart from a small minority whose families had been naturalized since the late 16th or early 17th centuries, few of these aliens ever darkened the doors of an Anglican church. The Huguenots alone had eleven churches of their own in the capital as early as 1688, and it has been claimed – no doubt with some exaggeration – that by Anne's reign the number had increased to 30.[162] But if foreign Protestants had a relatively high profile among the new breed of public creditors the native dissenting presence was even more obtrusive. Some remarkable evidence on this has recently been assembled by De Krey. For instance, of the 89 directors of the Bank between 1694 and 1715 no fewer than 38 (43%) were Presbyterians, Independents or Baptists.[163] Indeed, the most important new dimension I would incorporate now into my 1967 picture of 'the clash of interests' is the religious dimension. Like the pro-Sacheverell mobs who roamed the streets of the capital in March 1710 crying 'Down with the Bank of England and the meeting-houses; and God damn the Presbyterians and all that support them',[164] the Anglican Tory gentry of Queen Anne's reign detected an obnoxious and sinister connection between the *arrivistes* whose luxurious coaches rolled 'between the Excheq[ue]r & the Exchange'[165] and the brazenly flourishing state of religious nonconformity in London. For a landed class that had by now severed almost all its remaining ties with a Puritan past the monied men aggravated all their other sins with the most unforgivable sin of all (in Tory eyes, at least), the stigma of religious Dissent.

To compound that sin, the same men were often *social* nonconformists into the bargain. 'It is not perhaps surprising', as Alice Carter has observed, 'that investment in stocks rather than investment in land should appeal to

162. C. E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism . . . 1660–1688* (1931), pp. 359–61.

163. The proportion includes some whose membership of congregations cannot be definitely established but who were of proven dissenting sympathies. One-third of the directors of the New and United East India Companies, 1698–1715, were likewise 'in the dissenting interest'. De Krey, p. 109, Table 3.8.

164. Holmes, *Trial*, pp. 167–8.

165. Bodl. MS. Carte 117, f. 177.

Jews or Huguenots, who have so much experience of migration. The migrant above all requires to keep his wealth in as "liquid" a guise as possible.'[166] I argue below that in the eyes of country gentlemen the ultimate iniquity of the monied men at large was that for twenty to thirty years after 1688 they rarely sank their capital in large landed estates.[167] Subsequent research has, for the most part, powerfully supported the assumption that a revolution in public finance changed the attitude of London businessmen towards land purchase and even towards the governing criteria of social status. From around 1693 the traditional urge to cement the gains of a successful business career by moving its profits progressively into landed property was strongly counteracted by the great flexibility and high returns of the new paper investments.[168] The reaction lasted for fully twenty years, was checked – but no more than that – by the conclusion of peace with France and Spain in 1713–14, and was not reversed until 1720, the year of the South Sea crisis. Even thereafter it remained quite normal practice for rich City financiers and merchants to stay out of the land market, save perhaps for residential purposes, until very late in their lives or active careers.[169] To many in the landed interest it seemed monstrous that Londoners whose new riches were giving them access to political influence should evade both the heavy taxation and social responsibilities which an extensive landed estate incurred.[170]

166. Carter, *op. cit.* p. 17.

167. See below, pp. 161–3. It should be added that attitudes to the Jews were ambivalent. There was resentment at their evading the Land Tax mixed with apprehension that if they acquired estates they might acquire Church advowsons with them. The religious objection, Dr. Cruickshanks has reminded me, was to be widely voiced during the Jew Bill debates of 1753.

168. There were of course exceptions, some of them surprising: e.g. the dissenting East India merchant Sir Samuel Sambrooke, and the financier Sir James Bateman, whose family were naturalized Flemings.

169. Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through England and Wales* (Everyman edn. 1928), i, 6, 158, 168; C. G. A. Clay, 'The Price of Freehold Land in the Later 17th and 18th Centuries', *Econ. H.R.* 27 (1974), pp. 184–7; Sir J. Habakkuk, 'The Rise and Fall of English Landed Families', II, *Trans. R.Hist. Soc.* 30 (1979), pp. 213–16; R. Grassby, 'English Merchant Capitalism' (n. 137 above), pp. 93–4. Cf. the slight caveat entered by Nicholas Rogers (n. 138 above) in *Social Hist.* 4 (1979), pp. 448–9; but note that the case-histories of London aldermen, on which his qualification was based, take no account of Jews, very little of naturalized foreigners (few of whom found their way on to the bench), and not much more of native dissenters, who provided only 18 out of 64 aldermen in the period 1688–1715.

170. Cf. below, pp. 161–2, 172–6.

But what of the Tory gentry's assumption that one had only to scratch a monied man to find a Whig? Suitable caution was expressed in my original text about any wholesale conflation of the monied interest with Whiggery.[171] Yet subsequent analysis of the directorates of the Bank of England, the Million Bank and the New and United East India Companies in the period 1694–1715 has revealed, among those directors involved in City corporation affairs, only 13 Tories compared with 73 Whigs. Harley's administration tried hard to protect its own creation, the South Sea Company, from a Whig takeover; but even in its first four years of life City Whigs still contrived to capture 10 of the 18 directorships that fell to the financial and mercantile community. Among London's overseas merchants, regardless of their scale of operation, Tories were vastly outnumbered.[172] It is true that the first year of Harley's Tory ministry of 1710–14 was to show that, given enough encouragement from the Treasury, some Whig financiers and one or two of the City's merchant princes were perfectly prepared to put 'business as usual' before extremes of partisanship.[173] But this made little difference to the sense of alienation experienced by the smaller fry among the London liverymen: the mass of small tradesmen, craftsmen and artisans who felt just as resentful as any country squire or parish parson of the enormous fortunes made by the new City élite. It was their votes which enabled the Tory party in the London wards to capture control of the Common Council from the once-populist Whigs.[174]

There was, therefore, a 'conflict of interests' within the City as well as between the City and those whose incomes rested entirely on the ownership of land; and it has been enriching to the understanding of politics in the age

171. See below, pp. 166–70, *passim*. The provincial examples given there are of doubtful relevance to the debate.

172. De Krey, p. 125, Table 4.2; pp. 128–30.

173. George Caswall, John Blunt, Sir James Bateman, Sir Theodore Janssen, Sam Shepheard senr., and John Ward of Hackney were prominent examples. In April 1711 Heathcote's inveterate party in the Bank of England lost control of Bank policy to the moderates. De Krey, *passim*; John Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (1960), ch. 3; B. W. Hill, 'Loss of the City' (above, n. 137).

174. This capture, made in 1705, was twenty years later to lead to Walpole's controversial City Elections Act. In general see H. Horwitz, 'Party in a Civic Context: London from the Exclusion Crisis to the Fall of Walpole', in C. Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750* (1987); Horwitz (ed.), 'Minutes of a Whig Club 1714–1717', Introduction, in Horwitz, Speck and Gray, *London Politics 1713–1717* (London Record Soc. 1981), pp. 1–10; De Krey, *op. cit.* ch. 5.

of Anne to learn, as we have of late, how the parties in the heart of England, the great metropolis, not only wrangled over issues of religion, foreign and war policy and trade but 'also articulated in their rivalry the deep-seated social antagonisms that cleft the City electorate in twain'.[175] On the parliamentary and national stage, however, it was the grievances of the landed interest which attracted infinitely more publicity. The work of the past twenty years has done much to confirm the reality of the controversial rise of a 'new interest' in the City, while dispelling some of the myths which have coloured our perception of its character and political bias. It remains to enquire whether the much-trumpeted plight of the landowners retains the same credibility.

When Professor Speck and I wrote about the conflict of interests in the late 1960s the study of landownership in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was still overshadowed by the arguments of H. J. (now Sir John) Habakkuk: above all, by his pioneering essay 'English Landownership, 1680–1740' (1940). In this essay, on the evidence of two counties, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, he worked out a complex hypothesis both to chart and explain what he saw as a decline of the lesser gentry and of the owner-occupiers to the benefit of 'the large estate and the great lord' – a hypothesis in which the war years of 1689–1713, war finance and most of all the new land tax played a central part.[176] More recently Sir John has returned to his old stamping-grounds,[177] refining but on the whole adhering to and bolstering his earlier ideas. For political historians reassessing the animosity between landed and monied interests the most important development of a thesis which now focuses more sharply than ever on the period *c.* 1690–*c.* 1720 as one of singular difficulty for landowners, is the strong emphasis on the settlement of estates. These are seen not just as a factor protecting the larger landed patrimonies but as one of the commonest root sources of financial embarrassment in gentry families under the last two Stuarts. Many such families, it is said, went into

175. De Krey, p. 176.

176. *Econ. H.R.* 10 (1939–40). This was followed by further essays, 1951–65, developing his arguments about interest rates and land prices, the spread of the practice of 'strict settlement', the land market, and the disappearance of the small, independent landowner. For full titles and details see Beckett, 'Pattern of Landownership', *Econ. H.R.* 37 (1984), p. 4n.

177. 'The Rise and Fall of English Landed Families, 1600–1800', I and II, *Trans. R.Hist. Soc.* 29–30 (1979–80).

the war years after 1689 already committed to the practice of making secure provision for the future of their younger sons or for the marriage portions of their daughters by charges on their estates, charges that were often made possible only by mortgages. Habakkuk argues that the spread of this practice was rapid and was much encouraged by the easier credit available in post-Restoration England, as mortgage rates came down from 10 per cent in 1624 to 5 per cent or lower by the 1680s. For such families, therefore, the most chronic problem after 1689 was not so much static or falling rent returns or high taxation – serious though these often were – but the sheer difficulty of raising credit at a time when joint stocks and government 'Funds' often proved far more attractive investments than lending on the mortgage market.[178]

If such were indeed the circumstances it was understandable if the sufferers made whipping-boys out of the politicians who implemented 'Whig' financial policies and out of the self-interested machinations of the City, even though in fact they had fallen into an unforeseeable pit of their own digging. It must be conceded that the hypothesis – and as yet it is no more – does rest upon some plausible foundations. The rapid, if geographically uneven, spread of the settlement habit after 1660 is now generally accepted, as is the fact that most settlements were attempts to make a secure provision for the whole family; and Habakkuk himself has found in the numerous estate acts of 1689–1714 further evidence as to how far down the gentry ladder the practice had already reached.[179] By the time of the mid 18th-century wars against France, moreover, it had become part of the English landowner's gospel that periods of warfare made the Funds more attractive and mortgages more scarce and expensive,[180] and there is every reason to believe that this conviction had taken root from the experience of the Spanish Succession War and its aftermath. It would be wrong, of course, to underestimate the extreme reluctance of established landed gentlemen to dismember their estates by sales; and it is probable that the truly determined owner in difficulties could usually find a lender, at a

178. Mortgage rates were pegged by law to a maximum of 6%. See Habakkuk, 'Rise and Fall', I, 199–200, 203; cf. below p. 162.

179. See n. 196 below; L. Bonfield, *Marriage Settlements, 1601–1740* (Cambridge, 1983); C. G. A. Clay, 'Property Settlements, Financial Provision for the Family and the Sale of Land by the Greater Landowners, 1660–1790', *Journ. Brit. Studies*, 21 (1981); J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England*, pp. 59, 63 n. 73.

180. Beckett, *op. cit.* p. 83. Settled land itself could not be mortgaged: hence the need for estate acts to break settlements.

pinch, even in wartime. It is even likelier that a combination of smaller-sized families, compared with the first half of the 17th century, and far wider job opportunities in business or the professions in the forty years after 1680[181] helped in general to mitigate the charges on already-settled estates and reduced the need in future settlements to make *landed* provision for younger sons. Nevertheless no up-to-date reassessment of the contribution of social tensions to party rivalry in the age of Anne can entirely neglect this new perspective, focusing on the effects of strict settlement.[182] At the very least it should have relevance to the situation in the south-east of England, the region where the lure of the new investment openings was strongest, the rates of interest charged on loans probably highest, and the turnover of gentry properties, significantly, fastest.

What is clear is that more light and shade must now be brought into the picture of the landowners' condition nationally. The keynote of the large corpus of recent work on landownership[183] has been the stress on variety. In part this has been a reaction against a hypothesis based originally on research into two counties: both south midland shires, not far distant from London, agriculturally prosperous in normal times, and in 1688 already well implanted with established aristocratic and wealthy gentry families, dominant in their county communities. Political historians, too, must learn to temper their generalizations about the plight of landowners by introducing more and subtler variables than most of us were aware of in the 1960s: the multiplicity of individual and family circumstances, for instance – circumstances resistant to type-casting and remarkably prone to chance, even in a settlement-conscious age;[184] or the extent to which difficulties

181. G. Holmes, *Augustan England* (1983), *passim*; *idem*, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679–1742* (1986), pp. 262–9, 309–50. In creating many hundreds of new career opportunities in the armed services and the bureaucracy, war was actually a boon to hard-pressed landowners rather than the villain of the piece.

182. It should be noted that other effects, which have been much debated over the years by economic historians, e.g. the limitations of settlement as an instrument for holding together great estates, are not at issue here.

183. See above, n. 138.

184. Chance could, for example, burden an estate with a string of daughters, each requiring a portion and some, quite probably, a mortgage to supply it; or with a long-lived dowager; alternatively it might relieve its problems with a fortunate inheritance or a lucrative marriage. And no amount of human prescience could normally prevent the good stewardship of several generations being destroyed by one recklessly profligate owner, or by the ultimate Act of God, a failure of male heirs (a much commoner occurrence for basic demographic reasons in the century 1650–1750 than in the centuries before and after).

experienced by many families during the French wars were carried over from earlier years, sometimes from as far back as 1642–60, sometimes from the 1680s, a decade of glut harvests, depressed rents and falling land prices. Regional differences, too, profoundly affected both the problems and the opportunities of landowners. Studies of lowland counties are no sure guide to what was happening in upland counties. Direct taxation undoubtedly caused difficulties in some parts of England; yet in others it was next to negligible. The lesser gentry of Lincolnshire or Devonshire or Cumbria, though they suffered their share of wartime casualties, proved more resilient than those of the South-East. Even the small owners, 'the yeomanry', who appear in general to have done more of the suffering while the gentry did most of the moaning, fared very much better in some counties (especially pastoral counties) than in others.[185] Also to be kept in mind are the diverse fortunes *within* the same region or county dictated by, *inter alia*, soil conditions, types of farming, or the proximity of some estates to a flourishing town and therefore a busy market. Thus even during the Spanish Succession War raising a mortgage was rarely as serious a problem for landowners not far removed from booming manufacturing towns such as Leeds and Birmingham or from expanding ports such as Liverpool and Bristol as for those in the rural heart of, say, Bedfordshire or Suffolk.[186]

There were two respects in which my original argument did take careful account of the wide diversity of the English landowners' experience in the years of the wars against Louis XIV. They are best summed up in the following passage: 'it is understandable . . . that the country gentleman of *a few hundreds a year*, living in *any region that experienced the full rigours of the land tax*, should have been readily convinced that war and its concomitants, while enriching men whom he regarded as his social inferiors, was steadily encompassing his own ruin.'[187] Modern scholarship has not seriously challenged the opinion that, all other things being more or less equal, the scale of an estate was a fairly crucial determinant of the Augustan landowner's capacity to weather the economic storms of 1689–1713. And certainly it has not quarrelled in the slightest with the view of well-

185. J. V. Beckett, 'The Decline of the Small Landowner . . .', *Agric. Hist. Rev.* 30 (1982), and 'Pattern of Landownership', *loc. cit.* pp. 17–18.

186. Clay, 'Landlords and Estate Management', in Thirsk, *op. cit.* p. 172; cf. below, p. 162.

187. Below, pp. 161–2 (original not italicized).

informed contemporaries that the incidence of the new 4 shilling Aid, first voted in 1693, was very uneven. After only two years Charles Davenant, fiscal expert and economist, observed that 'the north and west have not born their due share and proportion of the common burthen'; and it is clear that this was because assiduous lobbying by members from the heavily-represented peripheral counties,[188] including Wales, had succeeded in persuading the House of Commons to perpetuate the compassionate treatment traditionally accorded them as 'poor' and 'backward' regions. As a result, the further north or west a county was, generally speaking, the more unrealistically its real estate was assessed. In 1698, when the land tax became a fixed quota levy, county by county, instead of a pound-rate tax, this situation was accepted and perpetuated. Many Yorkshire landowners were thought to be paying no more than 10 per cent of the true value of their rentals when the tax was levied at 4 shillings in the pound.[189] Cumberland and Westmorland paid, in effect, well under 5 per cent. The willingness of post-Revolution administrations to accept local custom in the raising of the land tax, and to employ local men as assessors, collectors and commissioners – in short, their opting for a quiet life to ensure peaceful acquiescence and a predictable return – all had the effect of building into the system the anomalies that were there almost from the start.[190] The latter were then further compounded by an extraordinary diversity of practice in the actual payment of the tax; for certain landlords were remarkably successful at 'passing the buck', or at least part of the buck, to their tenants.[191]

188. Cornwall alone, it will be remembered, had 44 M.P.s.

189. Though nearer 15% in parts of the East Riding. Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets*, p. 173.

190. It is well known that in addition personal estate and 'paper' income (e.g. dividends) soon came to be exempted in practice (see below, p. 161). It was not the case, however, that all salaries likewise escaped. In the civil service and the royal household, for instance, only the lesser functionaries, by and large, received dispensations.

On the land tax, see especially: C. Davenant, *An Essay on Ways and Means of Supplying the War* in *The Political and Commercial Works of . . . Charles D'Avenant*, ed. Sir C. Whitworth (1771), i, 23, 28; H. Horwitz (ed.), *The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell, 1691–1693* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 62, 312–49 *passim*; J. V. Beckett and C. Brooks, arts. cit. at n. 139 above.

191. Roebuck, pp. 228, 322; Clay, 'Landlords and Estate Management', in Thirsk, *op. cit.* p. 225; P. J. Bowden, *ibid.* pp. 72–3. The theory was that rents would be adjusted accordingly if the tenant paid. But the bargain normally worked to the latter's disadvantage.

All the same, it would be misguided to under-estimate the effects of high taxation on literally thousands of realistically assessed estates in the South and East of England. For one thing the land tax was far from being the only fiscal drain on landed resources at this period: landowners, like others, were subject to a series of poll taxes (in the 1690s), to a prodigious rise in the number and level of indirect impositions, and of course to local rates as well. Secondly, the effects were severe simply because they were so persistent. The struggle against France led to easily the most protracted period of warfare for Britain between the later Middle Ages and 1793. But further than that: there was a much longer period than the actual 19 years of fighting when the grip of direct taxation was either wholly unrelaxed or only slightly slackened. Before the land tax was imposed in 1693 there had already been four years of heavy, if more traditional impositions on real estate. Equally significant was the uneasiness of the years of formal peace which punctuated and followed the two French wars. In consequence first of the continuing threat from Louis XIV, and latterly of both the reality and fear of Jacobite insurrection, there were only four years out of 29 between 1693–4 and 1721–2 in which the rate of the land tax came down to the 'peace-time level' of 2 shillings in the pound which was to become the norm under Walpole.[192] The contrast between the pre- and post-Revolution eras was shattering. In the twenty years prior to 1689 the English Exchequer had received only £3¼ million from landowners in direct taxation, aside from their contribution to the Hearth Tax. The yield of the land taxes under William III and Anne was £46 million.

Not surprisingly, economic historians have rarely been able to pinpoint unambiguous casual links between taxation and the decision of individual owners to put all or part of their estates on the market. It is far more realistic to see the notorious land tax in much the same light as the tightness of credit: to think of them as the two last and heaviest bales – both plainly attributable to post-Revolution foreign policy and war finance – laid on the back of many an already grossly overburdened beast. Because of these two inflictions loads of debt which could have been carried with a struggle, possibly even shrugged off in, say, the 1670s or the 1730s could prove insupportable. The basic causes of indebtedness were often far removed from the political arena: ill fortune in the lottery of birth and survival;

192. Viz. in 1700, and 1713–15 inclusive. For the rest, landowners suffered 18 years at the highest rate and a further 7 years at 3s. in the £.

prodigality or imprudent social emulation – a factor stressed in chapter 5,[193] relegated to minor status by some recent students of the period,[194] but not infrequently highlighted by contemporaries themselves;[195] or, as was earlier suggested, heavy obligations already entered into in order to fund the increasingly common, and complex, estate settlements of late 17th-century England. But because high taxation and scarce credit translated existing embarassments into mounting financial pressures, and because they could be generalized into emotive and politically-charged issues, they inevitably became the focus of animosity and resentment on the part of the victims.

That the pressures *were* increasing and *were* for many families serious by the age of Anne would still be accepted by most historians of landownership.[196] Even the shining ones, the great squirearchs and the nobility itself, were not necessarily spared them, as the heavy land sales in this period by such families as the Fairfaxes, the Booths, the Robarteses and the Cornwallises remind us. Yet there remains logic in the assumption that (as they themselves frequently and vociferously asserted) the bedrock of the landed interest, the small to middling country gentlemen, were less well equipped to cope with these pressures than the great proprietors. The seriousness of the position in King William's reign may well have been exaggerated. Even thereafter the 'ruin' of families and the total selling up of estates is hard to document; and it is possible that the incidence of such

193. See below, p. 162.

194. E.g. Habakkuk, 'Rise and Fall', I, pp. 198–9.

195. Cf. Daniel Defoe, writing in *The Complete English Tradesman*, i (1726), 244: 'What with excessive high living, which is of late grown so much into a disease, and the ordinary circumstances of families, we find few families of the lower gentry . . . but they are in debt, and in necessitous circumstances, and a great many of greater estates too.' An exaggerated picture, without doubt; but Defoe was too good a journalist to allow hyperbole to lose *all* touch with reality.

196. Sir John Habakkuk has cited the extraordinary increase in the number of private estate Acts which Parliament was called on to pass in the quarter-century after the Revolution, to legalize the sale of settled land for the relief of financial necessities, as one statistical indicator of these rising pressures. (See 'Rise and Fall', II, 201–2, 215, where 260 such Acts are identified in that period, compared with only 77 between 1660 and 1688. Some were in favour of substantial gentry families, but most in favour of the lesser gentry). The statistics are certainly a telling pointer to the spread of the settlement habit well down the landowning league table (see above); but they may conceivably reflect little more than that, along with the greater frequency and length of parliamentary sessions after 1689. (I am grateful to John Beckett for prompting this sceptical reflection.)

ultimate disasters, as opposed to serious injuries, was not much higher in Anne's reign than at any other time in the 17th or 18th centuries. But there can be no doubt that by the second half of the Spanish Succession War, the very time when the monied men were making their most flamboyant advance, the clamour of the Tory gentry (and the less clamorous but noticeable anxiety of some Whig landowners, too) for peace, and also for the imposition of a statutory landed qualification on members of Parliament, was reflecting a genuine feeling of crisis in their ranks.[197] The price of land, for instance, which had actually risen in many areas in the 1690s, fell away again from 1701–13: not only reducing profits from sales but, more seriously, inhibiting lenders.[198] At the same time the two worst harvests for a century (1708–9) were bringing many tenants in the grain-growing regions to their knees and making rents still more difficult to get in than they had been previously.

In conclusion: the ample attention which historians have lavished over the past two decades on the economy, financial history and society of late Stuart and early Hanoverian Britain has deeply enriched our knowledge and understanding of the wider context of the party struggles of the early 18th century. *In toto* it has certainly not relegated to the level of a phoney emotion the conviction, widespread by the middle and later years of Queen Anne, that economic and fiscal changes of such moment were in progress – indecently accelerated by partisan policies and even by extra-national interests[199] – that vital parts of the social fabric of the country were threatened with grievous strains. Not even the remaining preserves of the Church of England, many Tories had come to feel, were out of jeopardy from alien influences in society and government. That said, it is now clearer than it was twenty years ago that even while the bloody and costly Spanish Succession War was still in progress and still under the direction of a seemingly entrenched Whig ministry, the wilder fears expressed were exaggerated and the political anger to some extent misplaced. Summing up, I cannot much improve on this reassessment which I made in 1981:

The rise of a 'new interest' in the City, incorporating 'a sort of property which was not known' in 1688, was no figment of Tory imaginations. It was a blazing comet

197. See below, pp. 75–7, 172–4, 178–80.
198. Clay, 'Price of Freehold Land' (above, n. 169).
199. See, e.g., W. A. Speck, 'Conflict in Society', (above., n. 142), pp. 137, 144.

across the London sky, and in its garish light a few emotive incidents, such as the Bank's ill-considered deputation to the Queen in June 1710, not unnaturally took on a sinister significance. But one can also understand how Westminster politicians, dazzled at the time by the comet's light, became blind during Anne's reign to those reassuring signs which can now be distinguished. They were loth to recognize that 'the conflict of interests' was primarily a metropolitan phenomenon: a source of genuine stress in the heavily taxed South-east, but of less account to the many counties where the land tax was lightly assessed and no 'new interest' had intruded into economic life. They either did not realize, or chose not to see, that the numbers of 'monied men' pure and simple – those 'retailers of money' whom Swift denounced as a threat to the constitution – were very few; that fundholders or company directors were more catholic in function, and often more traditional in background and more assimilable socially than hostile propaganda allowed. While noting with apprehension the cautious attitude of London businessmen towards land purchase, interpreting it as a device for evading a just contribution to 'the public charge', country gentlemen rarely observed that this trend pre-dated the financial revolution and even the war, and did not anticipate that it would be reversed once a saner balance was achieved between land values and rents and profits from trade or paper investment.[200]

The Peace of Utrecht took some of the heat out of the conflict but did not resolve it. Land values revived but many London businessmen remained coy in their attitude to the land market. The land tax was halved in 1713 for three years, only to go up again for the next six. Interest rates came down and the government's immediate dependence on the City for large funded loans was reduced. But a Whig ministry came into office in 1714; the international situation was soon tense again; and the unprecedented problem of a long-term National Debt of over £40 million enabled 'the monied men' still to cast their spells. When South Sea stock began to rocket in 1720 even country gentlemen, by the hundred, succumbed (in the vast majority of cases for the first and only time) to the magic lure of a paper fortune. The bursting of the Bubble, however, proved decisive. The crisis stripped away the tinsel from the world of high finance and dulled its glitter; and at the same time it made land, albeit at 24 or 26 years' purchase, seem a profitable as well as a safe investment again.[201] Even those numerous

200. G. Holmes, 'The Achievement of Stability', in J. Cannon (ed.), *The Whig Ascendancy*, pp. 18–19. See also the persuasive brief reassessment of the conflict of interests in Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, pp. 14–16.

201. Clay, 'Price of Land', p. 177; Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England*, p. 82.

merchants and monied men who had previously wanted little to do with it now found land unexpectedly beguiling. What is more, because the South Sea Company was in origin a Tory creation and retained right up to the time of the Bubble a strong Tory presence among its directors and principal stockholders, the opprobrium it incurred 'killed for good the dangerous myth that all the "knavery and cousenage"[202] which the country gentlemen had been coached into attributing to the monied men was purely the monopoly of the Whig side in the City'.[203] Finally, the South Sea crisis confirmed the man of the hour, Robert Walpole, for so long the quintessential Whig, in his conviction that at all costs the country now needed a lengthy period of peace, low taxation and social consensus. In this respect, as in the many others we earlier noted, the years 1720–22 saw the final curtain rung down on the politics of the age of Anne. For some years after 1714 the familiar scenes had continued to be acted out, with similar dialogue but in a theatre whose character and requirements were steadily changing. But for the age of Walpole nothing less than a new play would suffice.

Burton-in-Lonsdale,
December 1986

202. Swift's phrase: *Examiner*, No. 13, 2 Nov. 1710.
203. Holmes, 'Achievement of Stability', *loc. cit.* p. 19.